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BY

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS

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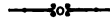
VALUABLE SERVICES

HE HAS RENDERED TO THE BRITISH ARMY

AS ITS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

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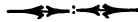
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ENGLAND AT WAR



BOOK II—CONTINUED



CHAPTER VIII

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1815

IN February, 1815, the Emperor Napoleon escaped from Elba, the island retreat to which he had been exiled by the decision of the Allied sovereigns. On the 1st of March, with some 800 followers, he landed on the shore of the Gulf of Juan; and quickly traversing France, almost without opposition—his little force increasing as he advanced—he entered Paris in triumph on the 20th. The kings and statesmen assembled in Congress at Vienna, immediately joined in a solemn declaration of union and alliance until Bonaparte should have been overthrown and punished as a disturber of the public peace. Preparations were made for a renewal of the war against France; and of the army assembling in Belgium, the command was bestowed on the Duke of Wellington. Napoleon did not disguise from himself the fact that he had to face united Europe; and the consequent measures he took indicated that he had lost

Cawley

ENGLAND AT WAR

Alten's divisions (1st and 3rd), and the greater portion of the Dutch-Belgians under Chassé, Perponcher, and Colbert.

Second Corps (under Lord Hill):—Colville's and Clinton's divisions (2nd and 4th), and the remainder of the Dutch-Belgians, under Prince Frederick of Orange.

Reserve (under Wellington himself):—Sir Thomas Picton's and Cole's (5th and 6th) divisions, with the Nassauers and Brunswickers, and the cavalry under Lord Uxbridge (afterwards Marquis of Anglesea).

The Prussian army consisted of four corps, stationed at Charleroi, Namur, Civray, and Liege:—

First Corps (under Ziethen), 31,000 men.

Second Corps (under Pirth), 32,000 men.

Third Corps (under Thielmann), 24,000 men.

Fourth Corps (under Bülow), 30,000 men.

The object of the Allies was to guard the frontier while the Austrian and Russian armies got ready to take the field. For this purpose, Wellington posted his first corps, in continuation of the Prussian line, which extended from Liege to Charleroi, around Mons, Enghien, and Nivelles. His second corps he distributed between Nivelles and the Scheldt. His reserve covered Brussels. The front of the first corps was guarded by the Dutch-Belgian cavalry, that of the second by some squadrons of the King's German Hussars, while the remainder of the cavalry was cantoned in the rear. Between the Allied and Prussian armies was an interval of about eight miles, and this interval was bisected by the river Sambre. Some competent critics have questioned the prudence of Wellington in distributing his troops over so wide an area, but Major Adams points out that the British commander acted on the assumption that Napoleon would adopt a defensive policy, and that the Allies would take the initiative. He suggested that when the Austrian and Russian armies were ready the left should move first, because it was the most distant from Paris and opposed by the smallest force, while in the way of an

advance on the right, grave difficulties were thrown by the French fortresses. As soon as the left reached Langres, the centre would cross the Meuse, occupy Sedan, and watch Metz and Thionville; then the right would penetrate into France, and seize upon Givet and Maubeuge. Three great armies, each 150,000 strong, would thus invade France in succession, and, connecting their operations, advance upon Paris, supported by the reserves, principally composed of Russians. But Napoleon's rapidity of movement anticipated and disconcerted Wellington's plans.

The Emperor, on a careful review of the situation, perceived that a defensive war would be ruinous. If, making Paris and Lyons his two bases, and collecting and arming his new levies, he waited for the Allies to attack him, he would have to abandon a portion of French territory, and allow a second invasion of France on so colossal a scale that resistance, if not impossible, would certainly be hopeless. To crush disaffection among his subjects and restore their confidence, it was essential for him to act upon the offensive. He knew that the Allies, or at least, Austria and Russia, could not complete their preparations until August; and he conceived the idea of advancing without delay against the armies nearest to the frontier, and in the most forward state of organisation; of interposing between them, and suddenly turning upon and crushing the one before the other could come to its assistance. He would then throw himself upon that other; and the Allies being driven out of Belgium, and the Rhine frontier recovered, his revived prestige would assist him in breaking up the alliance between the European Powers, and making favourable terms for himself and his dynasty.

'On the supposition,' says Mr Hooper, 'that the Allies could not begin hostilities until the 15th of July, he determined to begin on the 15th of June. He hoped to collect 140,000 men in Flanders, to defeat the Anglo-Belgic and Prussian armies, raise the Belgian people, and recruit the

French from the Belgian army ; and then, reinforced by the fifth corps (Rapp's), and by supplies of men from the dépôts, to meet the Austrians and Russians, and fight them in the old battle-field of Dumouriez, Champagne. He regarded it as a probable result that the defeat of Wellington would entail the fall of the British Government, which would be replaced, he thought, by the friends of peace ; if so, this single event, he said, would terminate the war. It will be seen how full of errors were the premises on which Napoleon built up this prospect of success. He had friends in Belgium, but not more than Louis XVIII had in French Flanders, nay, in Paris, and very few of the Bonapartists were in the Belgian army ; while it is now abundantly clear that the British nation was never, during the whole course of the struggle, so conscientiously and so heartily in favour of prosecuting the war against Napoleon.

With vast ability the Emperor concentrated in a few days the force he intended to employ against Wellington and Blücher, consisting in all of 89,415 infantry, 22,302 cavalry, and 15,871 artillery, with 344 guns ; and at three o'clock in the morning of the 15th, he moved towards the Sambre. Erlon's corps, after a slight skirmish with the Prussians, seized the Charleroi bridges ; and before evening the French army, with the exception of some 35,000 men, had crossed the river, and occupied the ground between Lambresart, Gosselies, Marchiennes, and Charleroi, with an extension towards Frasnes. At this time Blücher had 60,000 men in or near the position of Ligny, and 30,000 at Namur, fifteen miles distant. Wellington, who did not receive definite intelligence of the Emperor's movements until late in the afternoon of the 15th, drew together his scattered divisions in the course of a few hours, and on the morning of the 16th, had 30,000 troops at Quatre Bras ; and the remainder around Brussels, at Ath, Soignies, Enghien, and Nivelles.

The immediate object of the French advance was

Brussels; but before he could reach it, Napoleon had to disperse the Allied armies. He proceeded to interpose between Wellington and Blucher, to prevent their junction, and then, after an inexplicable delay on the morning of the 16th, threw the bulk of his forces, 75,000 men, against the Prussians at Ligny. The battle began at half-past two, and was stubbornly contested. The Prussians had the numerical superiority, but the brilliant dash of the Imperial soldiers prevailed, and about eight o'clock, Blucher's army was in full retreat. But though defeated, it was not broken. It fell back in admirable order upon Wavre, where Blucher quickly rallied and re-organised it. Its loss, however had been very heavy—something like 20,000 men, while the victors had lost 11,000. Napoleon had won the battle, and the ground, but he had not separated, as he erroneously supposed, the two Allied armies.

BATTLE OF QUATRE BRAS, *June, 16, 1815*

While the Emperor, with the larger portion of his army, was attacking Blucher, Marshal Ney was engaged with the advanced guard of the British at Quatre Bras. In front of that quiet Belgian village was posted the Prince of Orange's division of 7000 men, with sixteen guns, their right resting on the Bois de Bossu, their left on the Bois de Delhatte, and their centre looking towards Frasnes. About half-past one—or an hour before the action began at Ligny—Ney threw forward General Foy's corps of 9000 infantry, 2000 cavalry, and twenty-two guns, knowing that Prince Jerome was rapidly coming up with a corps of 8000 men, followed by Kellerman, and, as he supposed, by D'Erlon. The Prince of Orange, after a gallant struggle, was forced to give ground. At this juncture, a brigade of cavalry came up from Nivelles, and Picton's division, which had marched from Brussels, also made its appearance. Cheered by the sight of these red regiments as they passed

out of Quatre Bras, the Prince rallied his horse and foot, and made one more effort to withstand the veterans of France. He failed; his ranks were swept down before the rush of the impetuous Frenchmen, whose career was stayed only by the solid wall of the British infantry.

Ney then arrayed his forces in two massive columns, which, protected by their guns, and supported by their horsemen, he hurled upon the British left and centre. Wellington, who had arrived upon the field, hastened to anticipate the shock. Through the thick green corn that covered the field he pushed forward Picton's two brigades, who smote the enemy with a strong continuous fire, and afterwards, advancing with fearless mien, levelled their bayonets and drove back the staggering ranks. Meanwhile, General Foy had attacked a division of 4000 infantry and 900 horse, under the Duke of Brunswick, which was posted beyond the Bois de Bossu. The Duke rode up and down in front of his line, coolly smoking his pipe, 'a very gallant figure set in the front of the battle.' To check Foy's onset he advanced his lancers; but they were young soldiers, and the heavy discharges of musketry with which they were received shook their nerves—they turned and fled. The French horse dashed in among the battalions of the Brunswick infantry, who were thus left uncovered, and they, too, after a brief contention, broke, and sought shelter in the wood of Quatre Bras. Their gallant prince vainly called upon them to keep steady, but they had lost heart, and could not recover themselves; and while endeavouring to rally them, the Duke received a mortal wound. The vehemency of their charge carried the French into a collision with Picton's brigade, who, after their victorious fighting, had rested in a slight hollow of the ground, with the 42nd and the 44th in front. In among them stormed the French lancers; and as the flank companies were caught before they could fall into their squares, the carnage was very great. But the general resistance was as spirited as

it was successful. A withering fire emptied the saddles of both cuirassiers and lancers ; and in spite of their desperate charges, in spite of the crashing cannonade maintained by the French batteries, our squares kept their formation intact. The 42nd Highlanders were exposed to the shock of battle upon three sides. Two faces of the square were harassed by the French lancers, and a third by the cuirassiers—a fine body of men, with shining armour on back and breast. The fortitude of the bravest might have wavered at such a test ! A deep silence hushed their ranks ; only a single voice, calm and clear, was to be heard. It was their colonel's, as he called upon his Highlanders to be 'steady.' Onward came the horsemen, and the earth seemed to shake beneath the thunder of their hoofs, and the tall rye went down in swathes as before the reaper. Not a trigger was drawn. Spear and sabre were almost touching bayonet when the word 'Fire !' rang out from the colonel's lips : immediately upon its utterance followed a swift and deadly volley which laid the foremost files of the French prostrate upon the ground, as if they had been smitten by a stroke of lightning. The assailants, broken and dispersed, galloped off for shelter to the tall rye, while rolling waves of musketry fire carried death into their retreating squadrons. The 44th, when attacked, did not even form in square, but presented the old historic 'thin red line ;' their colonel, hearing the rush of advancing horsemen, simply ordered the rear rank to face about,—a movement executed as calmly and admirably as if they were 'on parade.'

Later in the day, the whole of his cavalry was sent by Ney to make a final charge, but they fell back from the immovable British squares like waves from an iron-bound cliff. And as they fell back the British guns opened upon them, strewing the ground with horse and rider, the dead and the dying. At this juncture Ney was apprised that D'Erlon's corps, instead of coming to his assistance, was

marching towards Ligny. He sent a peremptory order for it to return, but it arrived too late. At the same time he could see Alten's division, swiftly marching along the Nivelles road, and bringing its solid battalions to swell the British ranks. He resolved upon a final effort; for he knew how much depended on his driving Wellington from the field. Calling upon Kellermann's cuirassiers, he supported them with Foy's two columns of infantry, and threw them on the British centre. It was in vain; fire of cannon and musketry told upon them with such terrible effect that, after an impetuous onset, they turned and fled. The tide of battle flowed in Wellington's favour. Reinforcements came up in quick succession; and when at half-past six the splendid battalions of the Guards arrived, the victory was quickly over. The Bois de Bossu was cleared of the enemy and Ney sullenly fell back to Frasnes.

The victory was not lightly purchased. The Allies lost no fewer than 4659 men in killed, wounded, and missing, of whom 2480 were British. For several hours the strain of the contest had chiefly been borne by Pack's and Kempt's brigades, and out of 5063 engaged, 1569 were placed *hors de combat*. The three Highland regiments, the 42nd, 79th, and 92nd, lost 878, while the Guards, in carrying the wood of Bossu, lost 554. The loss of the French is estimated at 4375 men.

Next morning, Wellington received information of Blucher's retreat to Wavre. In order to keep up his communications with the Prussian army and to cover Brussels, he was therefore forced to fall back a little, but he sent word to Blucher that he would halt at Waterloo, and there accept battle from Napoleon, if he would promise to assist him with 25,000 men. In reply Blucher said that he would join him, not with 25,000 men, but with his whole army, on the heights of Mont St Jean. Accordingly, the Anglo-Belgian army crossed the Dyle at Genappe, and early in the morning of Saturday, the 17th, halted on the plain of

Waterloo. Arms were piled; the guns parked; the cavalry picketed their horses; and the blaze of the bivouac fires soon displayed the extent of the Allied position. Its left was about twelve miles distant from Wavre where Blücher had re-organised his army, and reinforced it with Bülow's corps. The French made no movement until late in the day, Napoleon having again inexplicably wasted several precious hours in doing nothing; but, as night closed in, with a storm of rain and thunder, they arrived at La Belle Alliance, in front of Wellington's army, and hastened to obtain what rest they could.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO, *June 18*

The fighting strength of the two armies thus brought into deadly opposition must now be computed: Napoleon, after deducting his losses, and allowing for a corps under General Gerard, which had been left at Ligny, mustered 48,950 infantry, 15,785 cavalry, and 7232 artillerymen; in all, 71,947 men, with 246 guns. Wellington could put into line 49,608 infantry (of whom 24,000 were British, and 6000 Germans), 12,402 cavalry, and 5645 artillerymen; in all, 67,655 men, with 156 guns. But of these he had posted a body of 18,000 men at Hal, ten miles off, to prevent the enemy from operating on his right flank—a precaution which some military critics have severely, but, as it seems to us, unjustifiably condemned. On his left he was safe, for a few miles distant were 90,000 Prussians, already marching to his assistance. Otherwise, he would have been forced to retreat; for his army, in fighting power, was greatly inferior to the French; so competent an authority as Sir J. Shaw Kennedy estimating it as equal only to 40,000 men.

The night was one of great discomfort to both armies, owing to the want of shelter and the heavy rain, which did not cease until four o'clock. The French got under arms

at an early hour, but Napoleon suspended his preparations on being informed by his artillerists that the ground was not in a fit condition for the movement of heavy guns, and it was not until eight o'clock that he drew up his troops in battle order. After forming them in three grand lines, he inspected each corps carefully, addressing them in the terse epigrammatic phrases which he framed with so much ingenuity and success. Wellington was equally active in his silent, reserved, and unostentatious way. After his men had cleaned their arms, fed their horses, and breakfasted, he placed each brigade in its proper position, carefully studying the nature of the ground, so as to give it all available cover.

The battle-field of Waterloo may be described in general terms as a slight shallow valley, or depression, of irregular width, which, both on the north and south, is bounded by covering ranges of low hills—covered, in June, 1815, with crops of grain—hills that strike away for some two or three miles in an unbroken line, and slope irregularly, but always gradually, towards this central valley or trough. The northern ridge was occupied by the Allied army, and in its rear centre stood the hill of Mont St Jean; behind the southern ridge, which was thronged by Napoleon's soldiers, stood that of La Belle Alliance. Through both these villages, and consequently crossing the field almost at right angles, runs the broad elevated causeway from Charleroi, winding under the green boughs of the forest of Soignies to Brussels. Near the entrance to this forest is the little village of Waterloo.

The extreme right of Wellington's army was protected by the village and ravine of Merbe Braine, to the west of which lay the village and church of Braine l'Alleud. On the left it was secured by the hamlets of Papelotte, La Haye, and Bouchain. In the centre stood a small outwork, the farm of La Haye Sainte, about two hundred yards from the Wavre road, consisting of a farmhouse, courtyard, and

barn. At the foot of the slope, on the right, stood the chateau, gardens, and wood of Hougoumont, extending half-a-mile into the plain, and forming, with thin hedge bound orchard, walled garden, and dense screen of trees, a defensive post of the highest importance, virtually the key to the British position. It was occupied by a strong garrison of the Guards, the two brigades of which, Maitland's and Byng's, were posted on the rising ground above. The Brunswickers were partly in line with the Guards, and partly kept in reserve. A thick coppice of beech which surrounded Hougoumont was filled with infantry and riflemen, under the Prince of Orange. The centre consisted of Baron Alten's division and the Nassauers, and was protected by the farmhouse of La Haye Sainte, which was garrisoned. Colville's and Clinton's divisions, a couple of Hanoverian brigades, and a Dutch corps under Lord Hill, were placed *en potence* in front of the right.

On the left, between the Charleroi road and the village of La Haye, were stationed Sir Thomas Picton's division, Lambert's brigade, a Hanoverian corps, and some companies of Netherlanders. Detachments of Nassauers, under the Prince of Saxe Weimar, occupied the hamlets of Papelotte and La Haye.

Thus the first line was composed wholly of infantry in columns, but its left flank was covered by a couple of brigades of light cavalry. The second line consisted entirely of cavalry, except that some battalions of infantry were held in reserve on the right. The hussars and light dragoons were drawn up on the right, looking as fit as possible for action; while right and left of the Charleroi road were massed the fine troops of the Household Brigade, the Life Guards, the Blues, and 1st Dragoon Guards, under Lord Edward Somerset, and those of the Union Brigade, 1st Royals, Inniskillings, and Scots Greys, under Sir William Ponsonby. The Dutch Belgians were in the rear of these splendid horsemen, and farther to the right,

the 3rd Hussars of the German Legion, under Colonel von Arentschild, an old Peninsular officer.

Napoleon, in like manner, drew up his army in two lines. There was an interval of seventy-five yards between each, and their centre rested upon La Belle Alliance farm, their right upon the village of Planchenoit. The first line included Count D'Erlon's corps on the right, and Count Reille's on the left,—or some divisions of infantry and two of cavalry, with their quota of heavy guns. In the second line, the right wing was formed by Milhaud's corps of heavy cavalry, and its left by Kellermann's cavalry. Behind each corps of infantry was a corps of cavalry, while in its centre the second line was further strengthened by a corps of infantry and two divisions of cavalry, drawn up on either side of La Belle Alliance. The reserves comprised the three sections of the famous Imperial Guard—the Old Guard, the Middle Guard, and the Young Guard,—with their chasseurs and lances on the right, their grenadiers and dragoons on the left, and artillery on both flanks and in the rear.

This skilful arrangement, says Siborne, presented to its great designer the amplest means of sustaining, by an immediate and sufficient support, any attack, from whatever point he might wish to direct it, and of possessing everywhere a respectable force at hand to oppose any attack upon himself, from whatsoever quarter it might be aimed. All observers agree in remarking the wonderful precision and regularity with which the several masses, constituting thirteen distinct columns, moved to their appointed stations, and all dilate upon the pageant of military pomp which was exhibited by those superb lines as they drew up in battle-array. 'There were nearly 72,000 men, of whom 15,000 were cavalry, and 240 guns, displayed almost suddenly before their expectant foes; a mighty mass of fighting power, revealed as if by magic, in all the majesty of strength and beauty of order, and trembling with eagerness to rush upon the enemy. Napoleon, attended by a glittering staff, rode

along those lines of French fighting-men, and their cries of delight reached the ears of the spectators on the ridge of Mont St Jean, and in the wood of Hougomont. It was Napoleon Bonaparte's last grand review.'

At the outset of the battle Napoleon stationed himself on the gentle elevation or 'butte' of Rossomme, behind the farmhouse of La Belle Alliance. There he remained for a considerable portion of the day, dismounted, pacing to and fro with his hands behind him, occasionally studying an unfolded map, receiving communications through his aides-de-camp, and issuing instructions to his lieutenants. As the fight grew more and more dubious, he drew nearer to its raging whirlwind, showing his mental agitation by his violence of gestures and his use of immense quantities of snuff. At three o'clock he was on horseback in front of La Belle Alliance; and in the evening, just before the Imperial Guard made its final effort, he had advanced to a point very near La Haye Sainte.

The battle began at twenty minutes past eleven, the French artillery opening fire on the Allied right. Napoleon's attack, however, was directed against the left and centre, in order to force that part of the position, drive the Allies back upon their own right, and secure the great road to Brussels and Antwerp. D'Erlon's whole corps was engaged in it, supported by Lobau's. At the same time Reillé was ordered to carry Hougomont, and at once sent forward King Jerome's division, which suffered so much from the British artillery, that it distinctly wavered. On reinforcements arriving, they recovered themselves, swarming in the lane, the field, the wood, and thinking that victory was in their grasp, they broke out into loud exultant cries. Suddenly their progress was arrested by the hedge which bounded the wood on the north. Behind it glared the 'bright red bricks' of the garden wall, which blazed all at once with a running tongue of flame, while a pitiless rain of bullets carried wounds and death into the crowded ranks of

the assailants. At that moment Wellington directed Colonel Frazer, with a howitzer horse-battery, to open with shells on the French troops in the woods and field—'a delicate thing,' as any mistake in the range would have inflicted severe loss on the gallant defenders of Hougoumont. But it was admirably done. The bursting shells wrought great havoc among the assailants; they yielded; and immediately the light companies of the Guards dashed in among them, and drove them back to the southern margin of the wood. A brief pause, and the French, recovering themselves, returned to the attack in greater numbers; the Guards, in their turn, were compelled to retire; their assailants recovered the wood; and a furious contest swirled and eddied round the château. Napoleon still maintained the battle in this quarter with a view of compelling Wellington to draw troops from his centre to strengthen the defence; but Wellington knew his Guards, and the heroic endurance of the British soldier, and left them to bear the burden unsupported and to wear the glory undivided. Though two whole divisions of the French army were hurled against them, they calmly held their own, never pausing in the rapidity and destructiveness of their fire. A part of the building was in flames, but they fought on with noble intrepidity, defying the most desperate efforts of their brave adversaries. The carnage was tremendous. In some thirty minutes the small four acre orchard adjoining the château was literally crowded with the wounded and the dead. Booth calculates that the attack and the defence cost the lives of 6000 men. He says that 600 fell in the attack on the château and the farm; 200 were killed in the wood, 25 in the garden, 1100 in the orchard and meadow, 400 near the farmer's garden, and 2000 behind the great orchard. At one time the French got within the walled enclosures, and forced the Guards back into the great courtyard. One body fell upon the hastily barricaded gate, burst it open, and rushed inside; but the Guards met them

with immense ardour ; and nearly every intruder was bayoneted on the spot. As the few survivors effected their escape, Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonnell, Captain Wyndham, Ensigns Good and Harvey, and Sergeant Graham, leaped forward, closed the gate again, despite the furious efforts of the enemy, and barred it against further assaults.

When he had ascertained that Hougoumont was safe, Wellington rode across the field to his left wing, where a great battery of eighty guns was covering the advance of Ney's massive column. About this time the helmets of some Prussian squadrons were seen on the heights of St. Lambert, and Napoleon despatched urgent orders to Marshal Grouchy, who, with his corps of 30,000 men, had been detached to harass the retreating Prussians, to close up his communications with the right of the Imperial army, and crush Bülow and his Prussians. He also threw forward some cavalry—in all 2400 sabres—to stay the Prussian advance. Shortly afterwards the Emperor learned, from a Prussian prisoner, that the whole of Blücher's army, which he supposed to be utterly beaten, was in full march against his right flank. It was long past noon, and the startling intelligence roused Napoleon into giving the signal for Ney's immediate action. With 18,000 infantry, in four columns, composed of 'deep narrow masses,' showing a front of about 150 or 200 men, and a depth of from twelve to twenty-five ranks, the marshal moved forward. Half the left column, flanked by a body of cuirassiers, was thrown against La Haye Sainte, the other half against Papelotte ; while the remaining three columns, with the rattle of many drums, and the din of confused war-cries, struck at the left centre of the British. Scarcely waiting to cross bayonets, a Netherlands brigade, panic-stricken at the imposing array, broke and fled ; and the French carried, but did not stay to occupy, the farm of La Haye Sainte. They then fell upon Pack and Kempt's brigades, who were under the command of one of England's noblest sons, Sir

Thomas Picton. At Quatre Bras a musket ball had broken two of his ribs; but knowing that the decisive battle had yet to be fought, he concealed his wound from the surgeons, lest they should forbid his appearance on the field. Bringing forward his two brigades (which were scarcely three thousand strong), side by side, in a thin two-deep line, he waited until the French had reached the crest of the hill, and were only thirty yards distant,—then gave the word—‘A volley, and charge!’ All along the ranks rattled the musketry; it ceased, and with levelled steel, the British, cheering loudly, sprang to encounter their foes. As they advanced, their heroic leader was shot dead; a ball crashing through his right temple into his brain. Prompt and terrible vengeance was exacted for his loss, and in absolute disorder the French columns reeled before the rush of that unconquered and unconquerable infantry. Nor was the fighting of Pack’s brigade less heroic or less successful. Then as the dismayed Frenchmen fell back down the slope, the horsemen of Ponsonby’s Union Brigade dashed in among them, plying their eager sabres, and cutting down whole battalions. Three thousand prisoners were taken, and a couple of eagles. Raging ‘like a cloud of locusts,’ these victorious horsemen rode straight upon Ney’s gunners, sabred them as they stood by their pieces, severed the traces and cut the horses’ throats, so that the guns were of no more use to the French during the remainder of the battle. But the fury of their charge carried them beyond La Haye Sainte, and threw them into some disorder. They were halting to re-form when the French cavalry stormed down upon them,—the cuirassiers in front, and the Polish Lancers on their left,—and it was not without much desperate fighting that they regained their position; but help was at hand, and a well-directed movement of Vandeleur’s dragoons swept the ground of the enemy.

Thus the grand attack on the British left had failed. The cuirassiers had made a gallant attempt to support it,

but after a sharp struggle had been scattered by Lord Uxbridge's Household Brigade. French authorities acknowledge that their loss in this phase of the battle was very great, D'Erlon's corps in particular losing one man in three, and becoming practically useless for the rest of the day. But the British loss had also been heavy, especially in cavalry, and many of our best officers had fallen. To strengthen his left centre, Wellington drew his brigades closer together, rallied and re-formed the fugitive Belgians, re-organised the shattered Union Brigade, and massed both Vivian's and Vandeleur's cavalry on the left. Another effort had been made against Hougoumont, but its gallant defenders had repulsed it nobly. Napoleon had then to decide how he should continue his battle. His infantry having been exhausted in the fierce attack on the Allied left and centre, it was clear that he must call upon his cavalry and the Imperial Guard. Moving Lobau off to the right to hold it against the Prussians, he brought up his Guard, and while bombarding Hougoumont with shot and shell, directed a heavy attack upon La Haye Sainte, which was garrisoned by 500 men under Major Baring. This attack was made by Donzelot's and Quinct's divisions. 'Major Baring had drawn in his men from the orchard, and now held the farmstead. But the ammunition of his men was nearly exhausted. All his efforts to obtain a supply failed. The western door of the barn had been burned for fuel on the previous evening, and now gaped wide open to admit the enemy. The French infantry, supported by cavalry on the left, advanced in two columns, one on the eastern and the other on the western side. Gallant men among them, axe in hand, strove to break in the great barn door facing the Charleroi road, but it resisted all their efforts. Others sought to carry the gateway on the opposite side; before they could cross the threshold they were shot down by the defenders. Beaten off, they fell back to the orchard, and thence renewed the attack, when similar

incidents occurred repeatedly. Twice they were compelled to draw off; twice they set the building on fire, and the fire was as often extinguished by the courageous Germans. Baring had been twice reinforced; but his men fell fast, his ammunition grew scarcer with every shot. Further reserves sent from above were cut off by the French cavalry. Yet the Germans, with admirable devotion, were steadfast to their officers, although they saw no prospect of victory, for the French grew bolder as the fire of their enemies slackened. They broke through a house door, leading by a narrow passage into the courtyard, yet could not make good their entrance. Then they climbed on to the roofs, and fired down upon the defenders. Resistance was no longer possible. The garrison had done all that men in their position, quite cut off from the army, and overwhelmed by numbers, could do; and the shouts of the French loudly proclaimed that they had won the farm.' This was the main success won by the French throughout the day; but it was won at an enormous cost, and, when won, could not be utilised from Ney's want of infantry. He threw into it, however, a strong garrison, whose fire proved of serious inconvenience to the Allied centre.

The second grand attack was then undertaken. Napoleon placed under Ney's orders, all Milhaud's cuirassiers and the light cavalry of the Guard; that is, twenty-one squadrons of cuirassiers, seven squadrons of lancers, and twelve squadrons of chasseurs,—5000 splendid troopers, who, in their gorgeous uniforms of lace and scarlet and gold, with shining mail, and spear, and sabre, presented to the eye a glorious picture of the pomp and circumstance of war. With their 'magnificently stern array' they filled the open space between the Charleroi road and the Hougomont enclosures. It was about five o'clock when Ney led them forward, striking diagonally to the left from La Haye Sainte, and dashing at the British squares with a gallantry worthy of their race. But the continuous and steadfast fire

with which they were received, mowed them down by scores, and though they advanced again and again, they could not shake the stern determination of Wellington's immovable infantry.

A third attack was led by Ney in person; the force employed consisting of the dragoons and grenadiers of the Guard, and Kellermann's cuirassiers, in all, 5000 sabres. But the British line, reinforced by Adam's, Duplat's, and Halkett's brigades, stood like a rock, from off which the torrents of French cavalry rolled back exhausted and broken. 'Their first charge,' says an officer who was present, 'their first charge was magnificent. As soon as they quickened their trot into a gallop, the cuirassiers bent their heads, so that the peaks of their helmets looked like visors, and they seemed cased in armour from the plume to the saddle. Not a shot was fired until they were within thirty yards, when the word was given, and our men fired away at them. The effect was magical. Through the smoke we could see helmets falling; cavaliers starting from their seats with convulsive springs as they received our balls; horses plunging and rearing in the agonies of fright and pain, and crowds of the soldiery dismounted; part of the squadron in retreat, but the more daring remainder backing their horses to force them on our bayonets. Our fire soon disposed of these gentlemen. The main body reformed in our front, and rapidly and gallantly repeated their attacks. In fact, from this time till near six, we had a constant repetition of these brave but unavailing charges. There was no difficulty in repulsing them, but our ammunition decreased alarmingly. At length an artillery waggon galloped up, emptied two or three casks of cartridges into the square, and we were all comfortable. . . . The Duke visited us frequently at this momentous period; he was coolness personified. As he crossed the rear face of our square, a shell fell amongst our grenadiers, and he checked his horse to see its effect. Some men were blown to pieces

by the explosion, and he merely stirred the rein of his charger, apparently as little concerned at their fate as at his own danger. No leader ever possessed so fully the confidence of his soldiery; wherever he appeared, a murmur of 'Silence—stand to your front—here's the Duke!' was heard through the column, and then all was steady as on a parade. His aides-de-camp, Colonels Canning and Gordon, fell near our square, and the former died within it. As he came near us, late in the evening, Halkett rode out to him, and represented our weak state, begging his Grace to afford us a better support.'

Meanwhile, Bülow's Prussians, under Generals Zeithen and Steinmetz, having left Thielmann with one division to engage Grouchy's attention, were approaching the contested field. The muddy condition of the roads delayed their march; but at half-past six the whole corps, 29,000 strong, was on the ground; and Lobau, though resisting bravely, was compelled to fall back upon Planchenoit. Blücher, who accompanied his vanguard, made a fierce attack upon the village; and to prevent its capture, Napoleon strengthened Lobau with 4000 of his Guard. The crisis of the battle had come, and it could be turned to the advantage of the empire only by a desperate blow. The British line was sorely thinned; but it was unbroken; and Hugoumont was still occupied by its heroic garrison. His grand attack by infantry, his second general attack by cavalry, had failed; and his sole success had been the capture of La Haye Sainte. An hour or two more and the destroying avalanche of the entire Prussian force would be precipitated upon him. Napoleon resolved, therefore, on calling up his reserve, the chosen veterans of his Old Guard, and directing them against the weakened right centre of the British.

The two regiments of the Guard remaining at his disposal he formed into echelon of columns. The first, or right column of attack, consisting of four, and the second or left column of six battalions. At half-past seven he ordered

them forward, giving the command to Ney—*le plus brave des braves*—and accompanying them a short distance towards the front. Simultaneously, Donzelot, who was then in possession of La Haye Sainte, made a similar advance on the left, and all along the line raged the action with fresh impetuosity. The oncoming of the Guard was preceded by a tremendous cannonade, to avoid the effects of which the British infantry lay down, in a line four deep, behind the crest of the ridge, while their guns played destructively on the impetuous Frenchmen. Ney's horse was killed under him; he led his column on foot, sword in hand. At first only the guns, the Duke, and his scanty staff were visible. Where was the British army? Suddenly, the Duke gave his famous order, 'Up, Guards, and make ready!' and within fifty yards of the astonished Frenchmen, the British soldiers leaped to their feet, and, with wonderful steadiness, poured in a close and deadly volley. In vain Ney's columns attempted to deploy; the incessant, well-directed musketry of the Guards, and the crashing storm of the artillery, broke it up into a disordered mass. The Duke cried out 'Charge!' and as our fighting-men pressed forward, exultant and irresistible, the veterans of France turned, fled. Like ill-fortune attended the second or left column of the Imperial Guard. With a cloud of skirmishers in front, and a body of cavalry in support, it crossed the hollow, and ascended the northern slope to wrest victory from the British colours. But it was taken in flank by the 52nd regiment, whose fire told upon it destructively; the Guards maintained their regular, deadly musketry; and the heavy guns, double shotted, ploughed broad furrows through the wavering ranks. When the 52nd brought their bayonets to the charge, the Frenchmen recoiled before them, and in a few minutes were in rapid and confused retreat. The 52nd pursued, supported on the right by the 71st, and on the left by the 95th, and swept the fugitives along the front of the British centre, over a distance of 800 yards. At Wellington's order, Vivian's cavalry, emerging

from the smoke-cloud which obscured the ridge, passed the Guards on the right, and riding swiftly down the slope, careered across the blood-red field. The whole French attack wavered; the battle-tide hung, as it were, suspended. Wellington's quick eye discovered the critical character of the moment, and his prompt resolution turned it to instant advantage. 'On the ridge, near the Guards, his figure standing out amidst the smoke against the bright north-western sky, Wellington was seen to raise his hat with a noble gesture—the signal for the wasted line of horses to sweep like a dark wave from their coveted position, and roll out their lines and columns over the plain. With a pealing cheer, the whole line advanced just as the sun was sinking, and the Duke, sternly glad, but self-possessed, rode off into the thick of the fight, attended by only one officer, almost the last of the splendid squadron which careered around him in the morning. Shot and shell still played in all directions, but the Duke rode on. The officer begged of him not to expose so precious a life. "Never mind," he replied, "let them fire away. The battle is won, and my life is of no consequence now."

Yes! Waterloo was won—the great decisive battle of modern times, which settled the peace of Europe for half-a-century. The French were in full retreat, for the Prussians had debouched upon the field in force, and delivered a heavy attack against their flank. After a gallant contention, the Young Guard was forced to abandon Planchenoit, and then the retreat became a flight—to use Napoleon's own words, 'a total rout.' Men thought only of saving their lives—they heeded no longer the honour of the flag, the restraint of discipline—arms were thrown down, knapsacks flung aside, guns abandoned. The carnage was awful, until darkness stayed the firing, when the Allied gunners could no longer distinguish friend from foe. Then, as the Prussians came up from captured Planchenoit, their bands raised the inspiring strains of 'God save the King!'

and the British infantry in the van responded with a cheer full of the consciousness of work well accomplished, victory honourably won.

Somewhere between La Maison du Roi and Rossomme Wellington and Blucher met, and exchanged congratulations. The British army halted when its advanced regiments reached Rossomme, and made over the pursuit to the Prussians. Napoleon escaped with difficulty, and, indeed, only through the courage and devotion of some of the veterans of his Guard. At Quatre Bras he rested for an hour or two, and despatched intelligence to Grouchy of the collapse of the Grand Army. He reached Charleroi at eight, and procuring a carriage, hastened on to Philippeville—an emperor without an empire, a general without an army—for the magnificent host which he had arrayed that morning in all the pomp of battle had literally disappeared. For miles the roads were strewn with wreck—with ammunition waggons, artillery, baggage, stores of flour and bread, of wine and brandy. One hundred and twenty-two guns were captured, 267 ammunition carts, two eagles, and 5000 prisoners. The killed, wounded, and missing cannot have been fewer than 25,000.

So complete a victory was necessarily purchased at a heavy cost. Even the impassiveness of 'the Iron Duke' gave way, when he rode over the field of fight, and saw the ground strewn thickly with the victims of the long day's slaughter. The total loss of the Anglo-Belgians is usually estimated at 14,728,—of whom the British numbered 6963, or about one-fourth of the actual strength engaged. Among the dead (1715 officers and rank and file) were Generals Sir Thomas Picton and Sir William Ponsonby, Colonels Gordon, Canning, and Lawrie, and Major Howard; among the wounded, General Sir Frederick Ponsonby, the Earl of Uxbridge (afterwards Marquis of Anglesea), Lord Fitzroy Somerset (afterwards Lord Raglan), Generals Cooke, Alten,

Halkett, Sir Edward Barnes, the Hon. T. Howard, and the Prince of Orange.

The British regiments engaged at Waterloo were as follows:—

INFANTRY.—1st Foot Guards, 2nd and 3rd battalions; Coldstream Guards, 2nd battalion; 3rd Foot Guards, 2nd battalion; 1st Foot (Royal Scots), 3rd battalion; 4th Foot, 1st battalion; 14th Foot, 3rd battalion; 23rd Foot (Royal Welsh Fusiliers), 1st battalion; 27th Foot, 1st battalion; 28th, 1st battalion; 30th, 2nd battalion; 32nd, 1st battalion; 33rd, 1st battalion; 40th, 1st battalion; 42nd Highlanders, 1st battalion; 44th, 2nd battalion; 51st Light Infantry; 52nd Light Infantry, 1st battalion; 69th, 2nd battalion; 71st Light Infantry, 1st battalion; '73rd, 2nd battalion; 79th Highlanders, 1st battalion; 92nd Highlanders, 1st battalion; and 95th Rifles, 2nd and 3rd battalions.

ROYAL ARTILLERY.

CAVALRY.—1st Life Guards; 2nd Life Guards; Royal Horse Guards Blue; 1st Dragoon Guards; 1st Royal Dragoons; 2nd Royal Dragoons (Scots Greys); 6th Dragoons (Inniskillings); 7th Hussars; 10th Hussars; 11th Light Dragoons; 12th Light Dragoons; 13th Light Dragoons; 15th Hussars; 16th Light Dragoons; 18th Hussars, and 23rd Light Dragoons.

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Shaw Kennedy, 'Narrative of the Campaign of 1815'; Muffling, 'Passages out of my Life'; Jomini, Thiers, Sir A. Alison, etc.

Note

The narrative of Sir Augustus Frazer, who commanded the British artillery at Waterloo, is full of interest. It was written, at eleven P.M., just after the termination of the battle:—

'We have gained a glorious victory, and against Napoleon himself. I know not yet the amount of killed, wounded, or prisoners, but all must be great. Never was there a more bloody affair, never so hot a fire. Bonaparte put in practice every device of war. He tried us with artillery, with cavalry, and last of all with infantry. The efforts of each were gigantic, but the admirable talents of our Duke, seconded by such troops as he commands, baffled every attempt. For some hours the action was chiefly of artillery. We had 114 British and some 16 Belgian guns, 6 and 9 pounders; the enemy upwards of 300, 8 and 12 pounders. Never were guns better served on both sides. After severe cannonading, the French cavalry made some of the boldest charges I ever saw; they rounded the whole extent of our line, which was thrown into squares. Never did cavalry behave so nobly, or was received by infantry so fiercely. Our guns were taken and re-taken repeatedly. They were in masses, especially the horse artillery, which I placed and manœuvred as I chose.'

On the 20th of June he wrote:—

'The last struggle was nearly fatal to us; but our infantry remaining firm, and not only receiving the cavalry in squares, but, on their retiring, darting into line and charging the Imperial Infantry Guards, and again resuming their squares, the enemy was forced to give way. I have seen nothing like that moment, the sky literally darkened

with smoke, the sun just going down, and which till then had not for some hours broken through the gloom of a dull day, the indescribable shouts of thousands, where it was impossible to distinguish between friend and foe. Every man's arm seemed to be raised against that of every other. Suddenly, after the mingled mass had ebbed and flowed, the enemy began to yield, and cheerings and English hurrahs announced that the day must be ours.'

We transcribe his account of the attack and defence of Hougoumont:—

'Rejoining the Duke [at the beginning of the battle], I was rejoiced to hear that his Grace had determined not to lose a wood, 300 yards in front of that part [the right] of the line, which was in reality our weakest point. I had very hastily, on the preceding day, galloped to this wood, saw its importance, and determined that the heavy howitzer troop should be brought to that point. Soon after, the Duke came up, and the *cortége* walked up and down. I must more minutely explain this wood. It is close to where the extension of our line touched the *pavé* leading to Nivelles from Waterloo. From this *pavé* there is an avenue of two hundred yards, leading to one large and a few smaller houses, enclosed, together with a large garden, within a wall. Beyond the wall, and embracing the whole front of the buildings and an orchard, and perhaps altogether three or four acres, is a thick wood. To the right, as viewed from our position, the wood was high; to the left, less high; and towards our position, thick, but low.

'Whilst looking about, remarking again that the weak point of our line was on our right, and imagining that the enemy, making a demonstration on our centre and left, would forcibly seize the wood, and, interposing between us and Braine l'Alleud, would endeavour to turn the right flank of our second line. I met Lord Uxbridge, who very handsomely asked me what I thought of the position, and offered me the free use of the horse artillery. In a moment

Bell was sent for the howitzer troop, and I rode up and told the Duke I had done so. By this time the enemy had forced a Belgian battalion out of the orchard to the left of the wood, and there was a hot fire on a battalion (or four companies, I forget which) of the Guards, stationed in the buildings and behind the walled garden

‘The howitzer troop came up, and came up handsomely; their very appearance encouraged the remainder of the division of the Guards, then lying down to be sheltered from the fire. The Duke said: “Colonel Frazer, you are going to do a delicate thing; can you depend upon the force of your Howitzers? Part of the wood is held by our troops, part by the enemy.” And his Grace calmly explained what I already knew. I answered that I could perfectly depend upon the troop, and, after speaking to Major Bell and all his officers, and seeing that they, too, perfectly understood their orders, the troop commenced its fire, and in ten minutes the enemy was driven from the wood.

‘At a quarter before three the large building burst out in a volume of flame; and formed a striking feature in the murderous scene. Imagining that this fire might oblige our troops to quit a post most material, and that it would have an effect, and possibly a great one, on the day, I remarked the time by my watch. The Guards, however, held the post, and maintained themselves in the lesser buildings, a troop of horse artillery was forced to give way; but the point being assailed, I ordered it up again at all hazards.

‘By this time the infantry were entirely formed into squares, the cavalry generally in solid column, the crest of our position crowned with artillery. It was now that the French cavalry, advancing with an intrepidity unparalleled, attacked at once the right and centre of our position, their advance protected by a cannonade more violent than ever. Behind the crest of the position the ground declined gradually to the easy valley in which the *pavé* from Nivelles

runs; and by an equally gentle swell the ground rose beyond the *pavé* to the position of the second line, perhaps half-a-mile from the first, but receding more towards the left. This declination of ground was most favourable to the infantry who, under a tremendous cannonade, were in a great measure sheltered by the nature of the ground—in a great measure, too, by their lying down, by order. On the approach—the majestic approach—of the French cavalry, the squares rose, and with a steadiness almost inconceivable, awaited, without firing, the rush of the cavalry, who, after making some fruitless efforts, sweeping the whole artillery of the line, and receiving the fire of the squares, as they passed, retired, followed by and pell-mell with our own cavalry, who, formed behind our squares, advanced on the first appearance (which was unexpected) of the enemy's squadrons. The enemy rushed down the hill, forming again under its shelter, and in a great measure covered from the fire of our guns, which, by recoiling, had retired so as to lose their original and first position. But in a deep stiff soil, the fatigue of the horse artillerymen was great, and their best exertions were unable to move the guns again to the crest without horses; to employ horses was to ensure the loss of the animals.

'The repeated charges of the enemy's noble cavalry were similar to the first; each was fruitless. Not an infantry soldier moved; and on each charge, abandoning their guns, our men sheltered themselves between the flanks of our squares. Twice, however, the enemy tried to charge in front; these attempts were entirely frustrated by the fire of the guns, wisely reserved till the hostile squadrons were within twenty yards of the muzzles. In this the cool and quiet steadiness of the troops of horse artillery was very creditable.

'The obstinacy of these attacks made our situation critical; though never forced, our ranks were becoming thin. The second line, therefore, was chiefly ordered across

the valley, and formed in masses behind the first; the broken intervals of which, where necessary, it filled up. Some time before this the Duke ordered me to bring up all the reserve horse artillery, which at that moment were Mercer and Bell's troops, which advanced with an alacrity and rapidity most admirable.

'It were tiresome to describe further. . . . The horror of the scene strikes me now; at the moment its magnificence alone filled my mind. Several times were critical, but confidence in the Duke, I have no doubt, animated my breast. His Grace exposed his person, not unnecessarily but nobly. Without his personal exertions, his continued presence whenever and wherever more than usual exertions were required, the day had been lost.

"'Twice have I saved this day by perseverance," said his Grace before the last great struggle, and said so most justly.

'Another saying of his Grace that evening to Lord Fitzroy deserves to be recorded: "I have never fought such a battle, and I trust I shall never fight such another." This was after the day was our own.

'In the general action our cavalry behaved well. The Life Guards made some good charges, and overset the cuirassiers, searching with the coolness of experienced soldiers for the unprotected parts of their opponents, and stabbing where the openings of the cuirass would admit the points of their swords . . .

'I may seem to have forgotten the Prussians in this battle. I saw none, but I believe that on our left they did advance; and the knowledge of their position might certainly induce Napoleon to withdraw, when his efforts against us were unavailing. We expected their co-operation early in the day, and earnestly looked for it, but it was not visible from any point where the Duke was till dusk, when we had swept the enemy from the plain in our front.'

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR

THE high dignity and responsible position of Governor-General of India was bestowed, in 1835, upon Lord Auckland.

The condition of affairs in India when he entered upon his duties was not such as to warrant a prudent man in introducing fresh elements of disturbance. In the north-western provinces—in those hot and arid plains which are watered by the great rivers—famine was slaying its hundreds of victims; so that the British residents at Agra and Cawnpore could no longer enjoy their evening drives, from the air being poisoned with the stench of unburied corpses. The famine was occasioned by drought, and brought with it diseases not less deadly than itself—cholera and smallpox, which swept away thousands of poor wretches enfeebled by long privation. In Oudh the disputed succession to the throne had led to insurrection and civil war; and the British, taking charge of the defeated pretender, a boy, and of his grandmother, who had used him as a tool, imposed on the new Nawab a treaty which made him the servant of the British Government. The Nepaulese, a

mountain people, never able to reconcile themselves to the pursuits of peace, were evincing a hostile disposition; and to guard against invasion, it was necessary to accumulate a considerable force on our north-eastern frontier. Then again, troubles were brewing in the east; the Burmese Emperor, Tharawaddee, who, until his accession to power, had always been regarded as friendly to the British, made such open and considerable preparations for war, that the Indian Government had to provide for the defence of that frontier also. Yet it was in this time of trouble that Lord Auckland plunged into difficulties in the north-west which were of even a more formidable character.

Afghanistan, the land of the Afghans, extends between the 28th and 36th parallels of north latitude, and the 62nd and 73rd meridians of east longitude. Thus its length may be roughly estimated at about 450 miles, its breadth at 470, and its superficial area at 210,000 square miles. It is a region of lofty mountain-peaks, deep valleys, and breezy table-lands, with a sandy desert stretching to the south-west. Its climate varies from the icy winter of the mountains to the genial summer of the valleys, where flourish the apricot and the vine, the apple, the plum, and the cherry, oranges, pomegranates, and roses, and waving crops of golden corn. On the north the Paropamisus mountains partly separated from the Central Asiatic steppes, now included in the dominions of Russia; and on the south it is bounded by Baluchistan; on the east by the Indian provinces of Peshawar and Scinde; and on the west by the rugged highlands of the Persian Khorassan. On nearly every side it is penned in by chains of mountain-summits. From the Punjab and the plains of the Indus it is divided by the massive range of the Suleiman or Soliman, and on the north by the heights of Khyber and Khalabagh; this barrier being penetrated by three passes only, the Khyber, the Bolan, and the Kuram. To the north-east tower the huge masses of the Hindu Kush, with

perpetual snow on its culminating peaks, and dark rugged ravines cloven into its depths. Inhabited by a brave and warlike race, it would seem almost impossible that a country thus fortified by nature should ever submit to the rule of a foreign conqueror.

According to an old proverb, no one can be King of Hindustan without being first lord of Cabul; and all the great conquerors who have made their way into India from the Caspian, the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean, have done so by traversing the plains of Afghanistan and its practicable mountain passes. Alexander the Great thus entered India, after taking Herat, which lies at the foot of the mountains, almost on the borders of Persia. Tamerlane conquered the region on his way to the Ganges; and so did Baber, the great founder of the Mogul dynasty, before establishing his imperial throne at Delhi. And it was from Ghizni that Mahmud, the creator of the Moslem empire in India, set out on his vast enterprise. The eyes of the British rulers of India had therefore been frequently turned in this direction as the probable source of attempts against our rule. Wherever the sea washed the shores of the peninsula British India was invulnerable; on the north an effectual rampart was provided by the mighty Himalaya; it was there, in the extreme north-west, that external danger might be expected to manifest itself. As early as 1808, during the short-lived alliance between Napoleon and Alexander of Russia, the Indian Government had apprehended an invasion from this quarter, and despatched Sir Charles Metcalfe to the Punjab and Mountstuart Elphinstone to Cabul, to negotiate alliances in preparation for such an attack. The dread of Russian aggression has never died out since that date,—has indeed been considerably stimulated by the continued advance of Russia in Central Asia,—an advance which has at last brought her within striking distance of Herat, and to Penjdeh on the very borders of Afghanistan. The consequence has been

the formation of two 'schools' of Anglo-Indian politicians; the one, known as 'the forward school,' contending that Herat and Candahar should be occupied by British troops, and the advance of Russia encountered along the line of the Heri-Rud; the other contending that Russia can never invade India with success, that all interference in the affairs of Afghanistan is to be deprecated, and that the business of India is to remain within her own borders, which, by fortifying the passes, and adopting some other military precautions, can be rendered practically impregnable.

In 1835, however, our Indian statesmen were roused into a sudden activity. It was ascertained that the Shah of Persia, who owed his throne to our intervention, had entered into suspiciously familiar relations with 'the White Czar;' and that he was meditating the siege of Herat, one of the 'gates' of India, and an advance, it was said, upon Ghizni and Candahar. If his designs succeeded, he would approach our frontier so closely that only the Punjab would intervene between him and us. True it was that the Shah of Persia was no very formidable foe, and that his vicinity need not cause us anxiety; but the case would be altered if he were, as was generally believed, the instrument of Russia. A vision of Russian agents on the confines of the Punjab, and of Russian intrigues in the courts of the Indian native princes, disturbed the authorities at Calcutta, and they scarcely recovered their composure when the courageous resistance of the Heratees, directed by a young English officer, Lieutenant Pottinger, compelled the Shah to abandon the siege, and retreat discomfited.* For then another complication forced itself upon Lord Auckland's attention. Dost Mohamed, the ruler of Cabul, was at that time in fear of an attack from the great Sikh chief, Runjeet Singh, 'the lion of the Punjab,' and he sought assistance simultaneously from Russia, Persia, and British India.

* September 9, 1838.

Lord Auckland, who was infected with the Russophobia that then agitated the official world of India, seized eagerly upon so favourable an opportunity of establishing a mission at Cabul for the purpose of discovering and countermining the plots of Russian agents.

To conduct this projected mission the Governor-General selected Lieutenant (afterwards Sir) Alexander Burnes, a young man of great energy and force of character, though deficient, as afterwards appeared, in coolness of judgment, and too much of an enthusiast in supporting preconceived opinions against inconvenient facts. He was accompanied by Lieutenants Leech and Wood and Mr Lord; and the special objects of his mission were declared to be 'the opening the river Indus to commerce, and establishing on its banks and in the countries beyond it such relations as should contribute to the desired end.' Leaving Bombay on the 26th of November, 1836, he arrived at Cabul on the 20th of September, 1837. 'We were received,' he wrote, 'with great pomp and splendour by a fine body of Afghan cavalry, led by the Ameer's son, Akbar Khan. He did me the honour to place me upon the same elephant on which he himself rode, and conducted us to his father's court, whose reception of us was most cordial. A spacious garden close to the palace, and inside the Bala Hissar of Cabul, was allotted to the mission as their place of residence. On the 21st of September we were admitted to a formal audience by Ameer Dost Mohamed Khan, and I then delivered to him my credentials from the Governor-General of India. His reception of them was all that could be desired. I informed him that I had brought with me, as presents to his Highness, some of the rarities of Europe; he promptly replied that we ourselves were the rarities the sight of which best pleased him.'

Weeks passed away, and months succeeded months; but the Ameer and the envoy were never again on such cordial terms as on the occasion of their first interview. Dost

Mohamed, threatened by the Sikhs on one side, and by the Persians on the other, demanded material assistance—something more immediately and practically useful to him than assurances of friendship and projects of commercial intercourse. So that when a Russian agent arrived at Cabul, he was led to entertain the thought of a Russian alliance. Burnes hastened to announce the changed aspect of affairs to Lord Auckland, who was then at Simla, urging upon him the necessity of immediate action if British influence were to prevail over Russian in Afghanistan. But the Governor-General could not be induced to offer Dost Mohamed substantial help, or to hold out to him any prospect of his recovery of Peshawar. On the other hand, he was peremptorily ordered to seek a reconciliation with the Maharajah, who was declared to be the true and ancient ally of England; and he was forbidden to hold any communication with Russia, Persia, and Turkistan, though the British Government declined to protect him from the hostility he would thereby provoke. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Ameer, thus affronted and humiliated, learned to regard the British with feelings of anger and aversion.

Lord Auckland's next step was one of the most extraordinary impolicy. He and his advisers conceived the idea (as Sir John Kaye puts it) of re-establishing on the throne of Cabul the old deposed dynasty of Shah Soojah, and they picked him out of the dust of Loodiana to make him a tool and a puppet, with the nominal aid of Runjeet Singh, the Sikh leader, who was astute enough to encourage the British in a mistake which was calculated to promote his own interests. It is only fair to the memory of Burnes to record that for this unwise and unstatesmanlike movement he bore no responsibility; that it was as unjust to him as it was to Dost Mohamed; and it must be regretted that he consented to carry it out, allowing his hatred and suspicion of Russia to prevail over every consideration of good faith and prudence.

In May, 1838, Mr Macnaghten was despatched to Lahore to arrange with Runjeet Singh the conditions on which he would co-operate. His support of Shah Soojah was purchased by the pension of an annual subsidy of two lakhs of rupees, to be paid by the Shah if he recovered his throne. Mr Macnaghten then proceeded to Loodiana, where he had no difficulty in obtaining the Shah's assent to 'the tripartite treaty,' as it was called, as the Shah, to use a familiar phrase, had everything to gain and nothing to lose. So far, however, the British Government was committed only to diplomatic efforts; no mention had yet been made of a military expedition. It has often been said that 'the way to have peace in India is to send out soldiers, rather than civilians, to be governors-general'; and the saying derives considerable justification from Lord Auckland's policy. For, arguing that a campaign conducted by Shah Soojah and Runjeet Singh must prove unsuccessful and that its want of success would discredit the British Government, he resolved that a British army must accompany their forces—in other words, that our troops should cross the territories of doubtful allies, thread their way through difficult mountain-passes, and plunge into the heart of a hostile country, to place on its throne a weak and incapable prince who had no supporters among its people.

An enterprise of greater folly and wilder temerity could hardly be conceived; yet, without referring it to the consideration of the Directors of the East Indian Company, the then President of the Board of Control (Sir John Holburn, afterwards Lord Broughton) gave the scheme his official sanction. By the best authorities in India it was strongly condemned; and the opinion of the native princes in India most favourable to our government was expressed with friendly earnestness by the Khan of Kelat. 'The Khan enlarged,' wrote Burnes, 'upon the undertaking the British had embarked in, declared it to be one of vast magnitude and difficult accomplishment; that instead of

relying on the Afghan nation, our government had cast them aside, and inundated the country with foreign troops; that if it were our end to establish ourselves in Afghanistan, and give Shah Soojah the nominal sovereignty of Cabul and Candahar, we were pursuing an erroneous course; that all the Afghans were discontented with the Shah, and all Mohammedans alarmed and excited at what was passing; that day by day men returned discontented, and we might find ourselves awkwardly situated if we did not point out to Shah Soojah his errors, if they originated with him, and alter them if they sprang from ourselves; that the chief of Cabul was a man of ability and resource, and though we could easily put him down by Shah Soojah, even in our present mode of procedure, we could never win over the Afghan nation by it.' The Khan was wiser than Lord Auckland, who, however, ignored all remonstrances, and persisted in his invasion policy.

On the 11th of October, 1838, Lord Auckland issued a proclamation to the Bengal division of the Army, in which he related the particulars of our disagreement with Persia;—dwelt on the unfriendly dealings of Dost Mohamed of Cabul towards our ally, the chief of the Punjab, Runjeet Singh;—and declared that in such a state of things there could be little hope of tranquillity for our north-western provinces, and that, therefore, he had determined to depose the rulers of Cabul and Candahar, who were of an usurping race, and to place Shah Soojah on the throne.

All these statements, we are compelled to say, were either contrary to the truth or extravagantly coloured. Lord Auckland added, that the orders for the assemblage of a British army were issued with the concurrence of the Supreme Council, whereas the Council had never been consulted. The abandonment by Persia of the siege of Herat deprived the Governor-General of any reasonable plea or excuse for his bellicose policy, and dispelled all fear of

danger from Russian agents and Persian warriors. But Lord Auckland and his advisers had conceived the idea of playing a 'grand game,' and were not to be balked. Therefore, on the 8th of November, the Governor-General, while expressing his satisfaction at the abandonment of the siege of Herat, announced that he should still prosecute with vigour the measures on which he had previously decided, in order to substitute a friendly for a hostile power in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, and establish a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression on our north-west frontier. From first to last the Governor-General, as if blinded by some adverse destiny, did all that he ought not, and neglected all that he ought, to have done. He blundered on with a dangerous and dishonourable policy, which dealt a fatal blow to the reputation of the British Government for just dealing and scrupulous good faith.

Towards the close of November, 'the army of the Indus' assembled at Ferozepore, on the banks of the Sutlej, and was paraded before the Governor-General and Runjeet Singh. It was a picturesque spectacle, invested with much dazzling 'pomp and circumstance'; yet a sad one for thoughtful observers, who knew on how iniquitous an enterprise these serried battalions of bayonets and those brilliant squadrons of sabres and lances were unfortunately bound. The total of the forces to be employed was 21,000 effective fighting men. The Bengal column, under Sir Willoughby Cotton, which started on the 10th of December, comprised about 9500 men of all arms, 30,000 camels, and 38,000 camp followers. The Shah's army, as it was called, though led by the Company's officers, and paid from the Company's treasury, consisted of about 6000 men; and the Bombay column, under Sir John Keane, who was appointed to the command-in-chief, of 5600 men.

The expedition was accompanied by Mr Macnaghten, who was to assume office as envoy and minister at the

court of Shah Soojah. Instead of pursuing the direct route through the Punjab, it was compelled, owing to the refusal of our 'valued ally,' Runjeet Singh, to permit its transit, to descend the Indus a thousand miles to Bukkur, and thence strike northward to Cabul, by way of Candahar. In violation of the treaty of 1832 with the Ameers of Scinde, which prohibited the conveyance of military stores by the Indus or through the province, the Bengal column traversed Northern Scinde, while Sir John Keane, with the Bombay column, landed at Kurrachee, and moved up from the south. The convergence of these divisions upon Haidarabad was intended to compel the Ameers to consent to a treaty, by which they were mulcted of a large sum of money, and compelled to pay £30,000 a-year for the charge of an army of occupation. This object having been obtained, Sir Willoughby Cotton crossed the Indus at Bukkur, and on the 21st of February, 1839, effected a junction with Sir John Keane, who then assumed the command. 'The meeting,' says the historian, 'was not a very cheering one. Shah Soojah was there with his troops, who formed the centre of the army. The British forces had suffered much from the fatigues of the way, and yet more, from the attacks of the Baluchis, who by no means approved this invasion of the state which adjoined theirs on the north, by means of humbling that which lay on the east. The army was already more reduced than by a great battle. But the worst was before them. It was March, and the heat in the jungles was overpowering, while in the mountain-passes, snow drove in the soldiers' faces. The Baluchis were always like a whirlwind in flank and rear,—never in front—catching up every straggler, and sweeping off camels, provisions, and baggage. The enemy dammed up the rivers, so as to flood the plains, and the force had to wade for miles together, between dike and dike, with only the jungle in alternation.' Only a month's scanty rations remained when the army reached Dadur, at

the mouth of the Bolan Pass. This rugged gorge penetrates a range of mountains running north and south, and reaching in some places an elevation of 5793 feet. The army spent seven or eight days in clearing its defiles, though the mountaineers, controlled by the Khan of Khelat, offered little opposition. The tents that were left behind, however, and the camels and their loads, became their booty, and the troops emerged from the mountains, hungry and destitute. The van was formed by Sir Willoughby Cotton's column; the centre, under Shah Soojah, reduced from 6000 to 1500 men, and the rear, under Sir John Keane, came up with it at Quetta—now one of the advanced posts of our Indian empire—on the 6th of April. Want of provisions compelled Sir John Keane to push forward to Candahar, which was undefended, its prince having fled to join his brother at Cabul. Shah Soojah entered it, unopposed, on the 25th of April. A few shouts of 'welcome' were heard, and some individuals, probably bribed for the purpose, threw flowers in his path; and mistaking the curiosity of the populace for a warmer feeling, Mr Macnaghten assured the Governor-General that the new sovereign had been received almost with adoration. But when he was crowned, on the 8th of May, though everything was done to dignify the ceremony that military pomp permitted, and the welkin resounded with the thunderous salute of one-hundred-and-one guns, it was only too evident that the attitude of the people was one of suspicion and dislike.

For a few weeks the army remained at Candahar, waiting for the harvest to ripen, that fresh supplies of corn might be gathered in. On the 27th of June, Sir John resumed his march, and through the Turnuk Valley advanced upon Ghizni, the famous fortress of Mahmoud, whence he descended, upwards of eight centuries ago, to carry the blood-stained standard of the Crescent into the fertile plains of India. The Afghans regarded it with proud satisfaction as a virgin fortress, impregnable to every attack.

At this time it was garrisoned by 3000 men, under Dost Mohamed's son, Hyder Khan, and was provisioned for six months, and in an admirable condition of defence. Misled by erroneous information, Sir John Keane had left his battering train at Candahar, believing that Ghizni could easily be carried; but he was speedily convinced of his error. It was surrounded by a deep wet ditch, behind which rose a massive rampart, some sixty to seventy feet in height. For mining or escalade the conditions were equally unfavourable; yet a regular siege was impossible from the delay it would entail. An exact description of the defences was obtained, however, from a nephew of Dost Mohamed, who for a heavy bribe played the traitor; and Captain Thomson, the chief engineer, learning that all the gates had been blocked up except one, the Cabul, suggested that this should be forced by an explosion of gunpowder. His advice was adopted; and under cover of a stormy night, nine hundred pounds of gunpowder, packed in twelve sand bags, were placed before the gate, which was shivered into shapeless ruin by the force of the explosion. Through the breach rushed in the storming party, under Colonels Sale and Dennie; and the garrison, taken by surprise, threw down their arms. Sir John Keane was apprised by three hearty cheers of the capture of the fort; and at daybreak the British ensign took the place of the Crescent. In this gallant exploit our loss was seventeen killed and 165 wounded. About 600 of the enemy were slain, and 1600 made prisoners.

Two days later some *ghazis*, or Mohammedan fanatics, made a desperate attempt to break into Shah Soojah's camp, and murder him; but they were driven off by Captain Outram. The prisoners whom he captured were handed over to the Ameer, who ordered them to be executed, and they were accordingly cut to pieces in front of his tent.

The news of the fall of Ghizni overwhelmed Dost Mohamed. He had expected that its siege would delay

the invaders for some months, and in the interval had intended to collect his forces, hoping to crush them by sheer numbers. With the Koran in his hands, he made an animated appeal to his officers:—‘For thirteen years,’ he said, ‘you have eaten my salt; grant me but one favour in return. Stand by the brother of Futteh Khan while he makes one last charge against these Feringhee dogs. In the battle he will fall, and you can then make your own terms with Shah Soojah.’ But they were stricken with alarm at the rapidity and success of the British movements, and listened apathetically to their sovereign’s fiery words. He, when he saw that they had resolved on abandoning him, parked his guns at Negundeh, fled from Cabul, and with a few faithful attendants, made towards the Hindu Kush. The British army entered Cabul; and Captain (afterwards Sir James) Outram, with eleven other officers, 250 British cavalry, and 530 Afghan cavalry, was despatched, on the 3rd of August, in pursuit of the fugitive chief. For six days and nights he followed him with grim tenacity; but his pre perseverance was eventually foiled by the treachery of the Afghan leader, Haji Khan Khankar, who, pretending illness, held back his troopers a march or two in the rear, and thus contrived to give the ex-Ameer a start of thirty miles. At Bameaan the pursuit was given up, and Outram returned to Cabul. Haji was duly punished for his treachery, being sent into Hindustan, and imprisoned at Chewar.

On the 7th of August, Shah Soojah, blazing with jewellery, entered Cabul in state, and was conducted to the Bala Hissar; but the populace received him with cold indifference, while his British escort called forth manifestations of hatred. Towards the end of August, his son Timur arrived, with the division under the command of Colonel Wilde, who had forced the Khyber pass, and captured the fort of Ali Musjid. Thus, to all appearance, the object of the expedition had been accomplished, and Lord

Auckland's policy seemed triumphantly justified. But the important question arose, What was to be done with the victorious army? It had successfully made its way through the rugged mountain passes, captured the strongest of the Afghan fortresses, and placed Shah Soojah on the throne of Cabul. What next—and next? In the natural order of things it should have returned at once to India; but Sir William Macnaghten,* who had been appointed 'envoy and minister' at the Afghan court, though sufficiently disposed to look at things through rose-coloured glasses, perceived that for some time to come Shah Soojah's throne would need the support of British bayonets. And this view of the case he impressed upon Lord Auckland with so much energy that the Governor-General, not without reluctance, gave orders for a portion of the invading army to remain in Afghanistan; and, accordingly, about 10,000 troops of all arms, under Sir Willoughby Cotton, were distributed in garrison in Cabul, Jellalabad, Ghizni, Candahar, and other places.

In the meantime, Dost Mohamed, who had retired into Kohistan, was busily employed in rallying around him a force of native warriors. Hunted down, however, with relentless energy, by a flying column under Sir Robert Sale, he fell back from point to point, until, on the 2nd of November, he was overtaken in the valley of Purwandura. He had with him only two or three hundred troopers, and was preparing to seek safety in flight, when a regiment of Sepoy cavalry rode down at full charge. Like a lion at bay he faced his pursuers. Baring his head, and lifting himself in his stirrups, he called on his faithful partisans, 'in the name of Allah and the Prophet,' to assist him in driving the accursed infidels from the land profaned by

* The Home Government showered rewards with a liberal hand in acknowledgment of the success of the expedition. Lord Auckland was made an Earl; Sir J. Keane became Lord Keane; Macnaghten and Pottinger received baronetcies.

their presence. And so fierce was his onset, that the Sepoys broke like reeds before a storm, and spurring from the field, left their officers to perish, sword in hand. Sir Alexander Burnes, the British political agent, who had accompanied Sale, and was a witness of the disaster, sent a hasty message to Macnaghten, that they should be obliged to fall back upon Cabul. It did not reach Sir William, however, until the following afternoon, when he was enjoying his daily ride; and he had scarcely finished reading it, when a horseman, soiled with dust, galloped up, exclaiming,—‘The Ameer is at hand!’ ‘What Ameer?’ ‘Dost Mohamed Khan!’ And almost immediately afterwards the ex-Ameer arrived, with an escort of British cavalry, and, dismounting, offered his sword to Sir William, and solicited his protection. He felt, he said, even in the hour of victory, that it would be impossible for him to struggle against the powerful British Government. Sir William handed him back his sword, and requested him to remount. They then rode together to the British cantonments. After a day or two’s rest, the ex-Ameer was sent to Calcutta. The Governor-General received him with due distinction, and granted him two lakhs a year to enable him to maintain his household on a scale commensurate with his rank.

With Dost Mohamed in gilded chains at Calcutta, every obstacle to the settlement of Afghanistan seemed removed, and Sir William Macnaghten was so far misled by the superficial tranquillity as to assure Lord Auckland that peace had been securely established. ‘The invaders rejoiced as if there were nothing hollow in this sudden conquest. . . . Sir John Keane left at Cabul a force much too small for a position so dubious; and while there were too few men, there were far too many women and children. The slightest knowledge of the character of the people ought to have shown the managers of the invasion that this was no place yet for the residence of English ladies and young children, or for thousands of helpless camp-followers hanging about

the soldiery, whose utmost efforts might be required at any moment. In the rash confidence which marked the whole series of transactions, Sir Alexander Burnes encouraged any and everybody to sit down beside him in Cabul, where he cultivated his garden, wrote gladsome letters to Scotland, and praised the people by whom he was soon to be murdered; Macnaghten never doubted about settling his wife in the same place; and other officers naturally shared in the confidence of these leaders.'

In April, 1841, Major-General Elphinstone, an officer who had distinguished himself in the Peninsular War, but was now old, infirm, irresolute, and partly imbecile, assumed the command of the army of occupation. In May, Sir Eldred Pottinger arrived from Calcutta, having been appointed political agent for Kohistan. The moment he arrived he saw, and frankly asserted, that the military force was inadequate to the duty cast upon it, and that it might be necessary at any moment to encounter a rising of the Ghilzee chiefs. Even Sir William Macnaghten admitted the truth of this, and complained that Lord Auckland had insisted upon a reduction of the allowances to those chiefs at the very moment their good-will was most needful. As a matter of fact, the deadly animosity of the Ghilzees had already been incurred by 'a mistake' committed some few months before, when a British officer had slaughtered a small garrison friendly to the Shah, under the belief that they were enemies. A Ghilzee chief was among the victims, and to avenge him 5000 Ghilzees were watching their opportunity.

The position of the British in Cabul was affected for the worse by the changes which took place in the Punjab. The death of Runjeet Singh who, on the whole, had proved faithful to the British alliance, had thrown the Punjab into a chaos of confusion. He had been succeeded, in June, 1839, by his son, Khurrak Singh, but as he was mentally incapable, the real power rested in the hands of *his* son, Nao

Nihal Singh. The former died of premature decay in November, 1840, and on the same day perished Nao Nihal, under singular circumstances. He had celebrated the last rites at his father's funeral pyre, and passing under a gateway with the oldest son of the vizier, Gholat Singh, when part of the structure fell, killing the young man on the spot, and injuring the prince so severely that he died a few hours afterwards. The succession was then disputed between Shar Singh and Chemd Khan; the former ultimately prevailed, and was declared Maharaja of the Punjab, but while the contention lasted, the Punjab could not be regarded as a safe and friendly country, into which the British forces in Cabul could retire, if adverse circumstances rendered retreat desirable.

Such was the condition of affairs, when, in England, Sir Robert Peel's administration came into office, and, as one of its earliest acts, recalled Lord Auckland, and appointed Lord Ellenborough in his stead. Before the new Governor-General, however, could take the reins of power into his hands, the expedition to Afghanistan had closed with a tragic catastrophe its romantic record.

The more thoughtful and observant among the British officers at Cabul had passed the summer of 1841 in deep anxiety. They were living in cantonments near the city; and so badly had their position been arranged that they were fully a mile-and-a-half from the palace-citadel of the Bala Hissar, where Shah Soojah resided, with a river between them. All the four corners of the cantonments, where imperfect defences had been constructed, were commanded by the hills or by Afghan forts; and their supplies of provisions were stored in a fort at some distance from cantonments. General Elphinstone's infirmities increased; and he called in, as his adviser, Brigadier Shelton, an officer whose great aim and desire was to return to India, and who therefore refrained from any effort to strengthen the British position. It has been well said that from the moment an

army knows itself to be ill-led, its heart and soul die out. So was it now. The officers grew moody and discouraged, as they saw the danger drawing nearer and nearer, while no preparation was being made either for defence or escape. The men were worn and weary with incessant fatigue; with bearing the insults of the natives, and with receiving frequent tidings of their comrades being picked off by roving enemies, as often as opportunity offered. The ladies occupied themselves with their gardens, which, in that temperate climate, rewarded all the pains they took. Sir Alexander Burnes gloried in his, which was attached to his house in the city; and during those last months of his life he was as confident and gay as ever. 'He had real friends among the Afghans; and these friends warned him again and again of danger—told him that he was deceived, that the ground was mined beneath his feet, and he must save himself, now or not at all.'

In the autumn of 1841, Sir William Macnaghten was appointed Governor of Bombay, and began to make preparations for leaving the country early in November. He was not, however, to escape the penalty for advising and sharing in an unjust and aggressive war. During the month of October, a league was secretly formed for the purpose of expelling the British from Afghanistan, and almost every chief of influence became a member of it. Warnings of the imminent danger continued to pour in upon both the English envoys. Mohun Lal, a Kashmir youth, who had received an English education, and was Burnes's faithful assistant, told him, on the 1st of November, 'that the confederacy had grown very high, and we should feel the consequences. He stood up from his chair, sighed, and said he knew nothing, but the time had arrived when we should leave this country.' Yet, on the same evening, Burnes called on Sir William Macnaghten, and disguising his apprehensions, congratulated him that he

would leave the country in a condition of perfect tranquillity!

For some months, the hope had been entertained that General Nott was coming up from Candahar with a well-disciplined force under his command, and with what was not less important, a clear intellect and a strong will. But he did not appear, and gradually it became known that he himself was beset by difficulties. Early in September, skirmishes had taken place frequently in the mountains north of Cabul, when parties were out collecting the revenue. In the following month, Akbar Khan, the second son of Dost Mahomed, descended from the hills, and posted himself in the Khoord Cabul Pass, ten miles from the city—that is, on the road to India. General Sale, who was on the point of taking up winter-quarters at Jellalabad, started to clear this pass. His soldiers forced it, but could not clear it, for the enemy was perched upon the rocky heights, where no guns could be brought to bear upon them; and maintained an incessant fire until General Sale's column emerged upon the open plain.

The British communications were now in the hands of Akbar Khan, and the suspense and anxiety which prevailed in the cantonments were terrible. Sometimes rumours of battle reached them, with great slaughter of the British on the road to Jellalabad, and no letters came to clear up the matter. Sometimes a messenger arrived, but he brought newspapers only,—not a written line even for the General. Occasionally, a letter or two came with a forged seal; occasionally, a letter, which itself appeared to be forged. On the 31st of October, 'no dispatches for the general,' nor private letters; but further accounts were expected on the morrow. On that morrow, 'no letters from camp, which has caused both surprise and anxiety. In the evening, as already stated, went Mohun Lal to Burnes, with his urgent but neglected warning. Early next morning [November 2] some faithful friends called on the Resident with fresh in-

formation. The first, arriving before daybreak, were not admitted, for Burnes was asleep. But when the Afghan minister, Dosman Khan, made his appearance, the servants woke their master, who hastily rose and dressed, in order to receive him. Then, indeed, he saw signs on every side, the significance of which he could not ignore. The streets were crowded with armed men; the air resounded with the roar of threatening voices. A dense ring of infuriated Afghans surrounded the Residency. Dosman Khan begged Burnes to accompany him to the British cantonments; but he was too proud and too resolute to abandon his post, and he still trusted to his personal influence over the Afghans. He could not but perceive, however, that Cabul was in a state of insurrection; and he wrote to Macnaghten at the cantonments for British troops, and to some friendly Afghan chiefs for assistance. Unhappily, too late! The mob in front of his house was raging for his blood. From a balcony in the front, attended by his brother Charles, and by his friend, Captain Proudfoot, he addressed the insurgents; but with yells of rage and hatred they overpowered his voice. At length they began to fire; and nothing remained for these three Englishmen but to show their enemies how bravely Englishmen could die. Proudfoot cut down six with his own hand before he fell. Setting fire to the stables, the assailants poured into the garden, and summoned Burnes to surrender. Appealing to their cupidity, he offered them a large sum of money if they would permit him to leave the city. Their reply was a demand that he should cease firing, and come down into the garden. A Kashmir Mohammedan, obtaining an interview with Burnes, swore solemnly on the Koran that he would conduct him and his brother to a place of safety, if he would order his guard to ground their muskets. As further resistance seemed useless, Sir Alexander consented; but no sooner were he and his brother in face of their murderous enemies than their treacherous guide exclaimed: 'This is Sekundu Burnes Sahib!' They fell

upon him, and cut him to pieces; his brother also perished.

While this tragedy was being consummated, the British army lay supine within their cantonments, about a mile and a half distant. Early in the morning Sir William Macnaghten had received information of the condition of the city, and that Sir Alexander Burnes's house was beleaguered; but he could not be induced to treat the outbreak as serious, and Elphinstone, always shrinking from active exertion, willingly agreed in this infatuated optimism. So it came to pass that a rising which, at the outset, might perhaps have been put down, was allowed to develop into formidable and fatal proportions. At length, after a disastrous delay, it was resolved to send assistance to Sir Alexander Burnes, and Brigadier Shelton's regiments were ordered to enter the city and take possession of the Bala Hissar. Valuable time was lost, however, in obtaining the Ameer's consent to this movement, and it was mid-day before the brigadier was able to set out. The Shah, it must be admitted, had acted with more vigour than the British authorities. On being apprised of the revolt, he sent his regiment of Hindustanis, under Colonel Campbell, to restore order; but that officer, instead of taking the most direct and open route, dragged his guns through the narrow and devious streets of the city, where the inhabitants contrived to block his progress. His regiment was driven back, and Brigadier Shelton arrived just in time to cover his retreat.

The standard of revolt had by this time been planted firmly, and the British were menaced with a danger which they were in no position to cope with successfully. The army was separated into two weak divisions, one of which occupied, as we have seen, the Bala Hissar, while the other lay in cantonments, a mile-and-a-half distant, with a broad canal and the river Cabul between them. The cantonments were almost incapable of defence, for they were

commanded by the neighbouring hills and buildings; the ramparts were so low that an officer backed his pony to scramble over them; and a host of camp followers occupied an area much too extensive for the limited number of troops appointed to guard it. But the fatal weakness of the situation was the incompetency of the commander, who hesitated and delayed when he should have struck, and struck promptly. Three courses were obviously open: to retreat at once to India; to remain in cantonments, keeping up a vigorous defence until assistance arrived; or to crowd into the Bala Hissar, sacrificing the horses, and there await relief. Either of these was dangerous, but either would have saved the army from annihilation, and the British flag from shame. But no decision was taken; nothing was done. Things went from bad to worse. The fort containing the commissariat stores was lost through the General's indecision; which made itself so conspicuous that, on the 9th of November, Brigadier Shelton was recalled from the Bala Hissar to infuse a little energy into the actions of the military authorities. The Brigadier was a man of iron nerve, brilliant courage, and strong will; but he was also a man of imperious temper, who sought to take into his own hands the supreme direction of affairs. Hence a desperate quarrel between him and his aged commander; and the two generals, allowing their private feuds to dominate over their public duties, opposed each other at every point. When both Macnaghten and Elphinstone would have adopted the Ameer's judicious advice, that the whole army should be concentrated within the Bala Hissar,—a strong strategical position, capable of being easily defended, Shelton was strenuous in his opposition, and insisted that the army should retire upon Jellalabad.

On the morning of the 10th, the Afghans, mustering in force on the contiguous heights, discharged volleys of *feu de joie*, and filled the air with tumultuous shouts of defiance. They seized upon several forts near the cantonments, which

enabled them to harass the British with a continuous fire. As one of them, the Pika-Bashee, was within musket-shot of the British position, so that the Afghan marksmen coolly picked off our artillerists at their guns, Macnaghten persuaded General Elphinstone to order Shelton to attack it with a force of about 2000 men of all arms. 'I was occupied,' says Shelton, 'in telling off the force about 10 A.M., when I heard Elphinstone say to his aide-de-camp: "I think we had better give it up!"' The latter replied, "Then why not countermand it at once?" which was done, and I returned, as you may conceive, disgusted with such vacillation.' Fresh pressure being applied by the enemy, Elphinstone again ordered an attack, but in the interval the enemy had strengthened their defences, and though the fort was eventually carried, the operation cost 200 killed and wounded.

Discouraged by these incessant differences between the military commanders, Macnaghten made an attempt to purchase from the Afghan chiefs a secure retreat for the British forces; but his offers of two, three, and even five lakhs of rupees were coldly rejected. On the 13th, the enemy assembled on the Behmaroo Hills, and cannonaded the British camp. The envoy wished them dislodged; but neither Elphinstone nor Shelton would act until Macnaghten assumed the responsibility. Then the Brigadier sallied forth, and, from dawn until far into the day, was hotly engaged. His soldiers were victorious, but the enemy speedily re-assembled in their commanding position. On the 23rd the attack was repeated. Shelton, with his usual impetuosity, carried the hills, and posted himself on the north-eastern extremity, overhanging the village of Behmaroo. He took with him only one gun; but this was skilfully and steadily worked, until rendered unserviceable by the overheating of the vent. The British movements had been seen from the city; and soon after daybreak the plain was covered with thousands of the enemy, who either re-occupied

the village or seized an opposite hill, from which their musketry was incessant and destructive. Leaving five companies in position, Shelton led the remainder of his troops, with one gun, to a point near the brow of the hill, over a deep gorge, where the enemy had mustered in greatest force. Unhappily, the one gun soon proved useless; and our men were compelled to meet the far-reaching Afghan matchlocks with their worn-out and short-range muskets, which did but little execution. They maintained their ground, however, until a body of Afghans, who had lain concealed in the gorge, crept up the hill-side, and suddenly fell upon their flank. Taken by surprise, and spent with hunger and fatigue, our men gave way. 'Shelton, who ever in the midst of danger, stood with iron courage exposed to the thickest fire of the enemy, vainly called upon his men to charge. Not a man brought down his bayonet to the position which the English soldier knows to assume when he sees the enemy before him. The Afghans had planted a standard upon the hill, only some thirty yards from the British squares; and now an officer proclaimed a reward, equal in the eyes of the common Sepoy to a year's pay, to anyone who would advance and take it. But not a man responded to the appeal. A great fear was upon them all. The officers stood up like brave men, and hurled stones at the advancing enemy. But nothing seemed to infuse courage into our panic-stricken troops.'

They were thoroughly demoralized, and had lost confidence in themselves, in each other, and in their commanders. With so much haste was their retreat conducted, and with such vigour did the enemy press the pursuit, that Afghans and British got mixed up together, and the Afghans might easily have poured into and captured the cantonments, if they had realised the full measure of their success. But the chiefs drew off their men and marched back to Cabul, contented with their victory.

As the army had lost all heart and courage, all unity

and discipline, one of two alternatives must needs be adopted ; either that occupation of the Bala Hissar which Shah Soojah had already suggested, or a renewal of the negotiations with the insurgent chiefs. The latter was decided upon, and, after some delay, two Afghan leaders arrived to consult with the envoy. Their demand, that the British should surrender at discretion, giving up their arms, ammunition, and treasure, was at once refused. Then came another period of delay, but as the British supplies were rapidly diminishing, and the shadow of approaching famine impended over the army, Macnaghten, on the 11th of December, had a second interview with the Afghan chiefs, and finally agreed, though with a heavy heart, to the following conditions :—

That the British troops at Cabul, Jellalabad, Ghizni, and Candahar should evacuate the country, receiving the fullest assistance in carriage and provisions.

That Shah Soojah should be allowed to accompany the British troops, or remain in Afghanistan, as he might prefer.

That on the arrival of the British troops at Peshawar, Dost Mohamed, his family, and all Afghans detained in India, should be set at liberty ; that the army was to quit the cantonment in three days, and in the meantime to receive ample supplies of provisions, for which due payment was to be made ; and, finally, that four British officers were to be given up as hostages for the fulfilment of those conditions.

Seldom has a British army been called upon to assent to terms so humiliating ; but the reproach does not lie with Macnaghten so much as with the unwise policy of which he was the instrument. And it must be remembered that his hands had been tied by the vacillation and incompetency of the military authorities. Unfortunately, humiliating as these terms were, the British failed to secure from the Afghans a faithful interpretation of them ; and the ink

with which the treaty was signed had hardly time to dry, before they prepared to violate its conditions. The Bala Hissar was evacuated on the 13th, and its garrison retired to the cantonments; but the Afghans harassed them incessantly on the road, and destroyed a considerable portion of the stores. Provisions were supplied in such small quantities, that our troops suffered severely from hunger. Frequently they were intercepted by the rabble of fanatics and robbers, who surrounded the cantonments; these, however, a whiff of grape-shot might have dispersed, had the British commander been gifted with a particle of energy.

The end of this tragical chapter of errors was fast approaching. The forts around the cantonments were given up; then might you have seen the painful spectacle of the boastful Afghans, sitting on the walls which overlooked the British quarters, and mocking at the humiliation of the British flag. But the departure of the army was still delayed; the chiefs withholding the promised supplies of provisions and beasts of burden; and Sir William Macnaghten tarrying in the hope of reinforcements coming up from Candahar, which might enable him to turn the tables on his enemies. Graver mistake was never made! Had the army begun its retreat immediately on the signature of the treaty, and by forced marches hurried through the passes, no doubt it would have reached Jellalabad in safety, and a dark chapter would have been wanting in our military annals. But the delay proved fatal. The very elements seemed to conspire against our countrymen; on the 18th of December snow began to fall, and to fall so thickly that, before sunset, it lay several inches deep on the ground. Accepting this warning, Sir William, next day, despatched orders for the evacuation of Ghizni, Jellalabad, and Candahar, and made a fresh attempt to compass his objects by diplomacy. While openly negotiating with the Barukzyes and their leader, Akbar Khan—the younger son of

Dost Mohamed, of whom mention has already been made—he secretly endeavoured to bribe the Ghilzees and the Kuzzilbashes to espouse the cause of Shah Soojah and the British. This was a dangerous game for even a player with Oriental skill and subtlety; in Macnaghten's less cunning hands it proved a failure. There can be no manner of doubt that the Afghans detected his double-dealing, and that it precipitated the catastrophe.

On the evening of December 22, Akbar Khan sent Major Skinner, his prisoner, with two vakeels, to submit to Sir William Macnaghten new proposals. These were of so fair a character that the envoy forgot or made light of a warning he had secretly received, that a snare was being laid for his destruction, and that it would be fatal to treat separately with the young Barukzye chief. He hastened to accept them, though their extreme favourableness should have awakened his suspicions. This was their effect:—That Akbar Khan and the Ghilzees should unite with the British, and attack the fort of Mohamed Khan; that the British army should remain until the spring, and then retire voluntarily; that Shah Soojah should enjoy the title of Ameer, and Akbar Khan become his vizier, with an annuity from the British Government of four lakhs of rupees and an immediate payment of thirty lakhs.

Next morning Macnaghten revealed his new treaty to General Elphinstone and Captain Mackenzie, both of whom denounced it as an imposture and a trap, and endeavoured to dissuade him from attending a conference which Akbar Khan had suggested. 'Let me alone for that,' replied the envoy, 'dangerous though it be; if it succeeds, it is worth all risks; the rebels have not fulfilled one article of the treaty, and I have no confidence in them, if by it we can only save our honour, all will be well. At any rate, I would rather suffer a hundred deaths than live the last six weeks over again.' He added a request to the general that he would get ready two regiments and a couple of guns as

speedily and as quietly as possible, for the capture of Mohamed Khan's fort. At noon, accompanied by Captains Trevor, Mackenzie, and Lawrence, and escorted by sixteen horsemen, the doomed man set out on his fatal expedition.

Near the bank of the Cabul river, and about six hundred yards from the cantonments, rose some small hillocks, and on the further side, where the snow lay less thickly than on other parts, Akbar Khan's servants had spread some horse-cloths. The British officers exchanged greetings with the Afghan sirdars, and conversed for a short time on horseback. Sir William presented a beautiful and spirited Arab to Akbar Khan, who received it with many expressions of gratitude, and at the same time returned thanks for a gift of pistols sent to him on the preceding day. Dismounting, the whole party then repaired to the hillside, where Macnaghten stretched himself full length upon the bank, with Trevor and Mackenzie sitting beside him. The conference opened with a question from Akbar Khan, who sat on the other side of the envoy: Was he ready to carry out the proposal of the preceding evening? 'Why not?' said Macnaghten. The increasing numbers of armed Afghans at this time excited the suspicions of Lawrence and Mackenzie, who protested that if the conference were to be a private one, the intruders ought to be removed. Thereupon some of the chiefs lashed out with their whips at the narrowing circle; but Akbar Khan remarked that their presence did not signify, as all were in the secret with him.

Scarcely had the words fallen from his lips when the envoy and his companions were roughly seized from behind. A scene of terrible confusion followed. The officers were compelled each to mount a horse ridden by an Afghan chief, and were soon running the gauntlet of a mob of fanatics, who struck at them as they passed. Unfortunately Captain Trevor lost his seat, and was cut to pieces.

Lawrence and Mackenzie, however, contrived to reach Mohamed Khan's fort.

A desperate struggle took place between Macnaghten and Akbar Khan. Eye-witnesses tell us that their countenances could never be forgotten by those who saw them. Macnaghten's charged with 'horror and astonishment,' Akbar's with 'diabolical ferocity.' The only words Macnaghten was heard to utter were 'Az borac khoda' (for God's sake). Exasperated past all control (it is said) by the resistance of his victim, whom he intended only to seize and detain as a hostage, the Afghan drew a pistol from his girdle, and shot him through the body. Whether he died on the spot, or whether he was slain by the infuriated natives, who had pressed eagerly forward, is not known; but these ferocious fanatics flung themselves on the prostrate body and hacked it to pieces with their knives. They made a plaything of his head, with its green spectacles, and held up one of his severed hands at the prison-windows of the officers whom the intervention of the Afghan chiefs had rescued.

Even this gloomy tragedy infused no activity into the councils of the British commanders; nor could Pottinger, who succeeded to Macnaghten's post, persuade them to adopt a bold and resolute movement. To get out of Afghanistan, by some arrangement with the Afghan chiefs, seemed their one aim and object. A new treaty was negotiated, in spite of Major Pottinger's remonstrances, which conceded the surrender of all the new and spare muskets and guns, except six, and arranged for the detention of General Sale, his wife, and daughter, and all other officers of rank, who were married and had families, as hostages. On the 26th, letters arrived from Peshawar and Jellalabad, with the news that Lord Auckland was hurrying up reinforcements from India, and imploring them to hold their ground. As it was known that the Afghan chiefs were quarrelling with

one another, the major again urged the generals to throw aside their delusive treaties, and either fling themselves into the Bala Hissar, or cut their way down to Jellalabad. But he was again defeated. Profoundly mortified, he proceeded with the negotiation, but refused to complete the pecuniary arrangements without the presence of Captain Lawrence, the late envoy's secretary. He was accordingly released, and on the 29th of December, came into cantonments, where he drew bills upon the Indian Government for fourteen lakhs of rupees. But as he made them payable after the safe arrival of the army at Peshawar, which the chiefs professed to guarantee, he left it open to the Government to repudiate them. The next step was the surrender of the guns, an indignity which even the generals felt like a stroke of mortal pain, and afterwards, the hostages were delivered up, namely,—Captains Walsh and Drummond, and Lieutenants Webb and Warburton,—besides Lieutenants Conolly and Airey, who were already prisoners. On their part, the Afghan chiefs released Major Skinner and Captain Mackenzie. The ratified treaty, to which were attached the seals of eighteen of the Afghan chiefs, was sent in on the 4th of January, but with it came messages from friendly Afghans, that preparations were being made to attack the British as soon as they were clear of their cantonments, and that Akbar Khan had sworn to annihilate all but one soldier, who was to be allowed to carry to Jellalabad, the dark tidings of the destruction of the British army.

On the morning of the 6th of January, 1842, General Elphinstone's battalions, about 4500 strong, with 11,000 camp-followers, marched out of camp, and began their retreat towards the Indus.

Two hours after midnight, the rear guard, which had been under arms since eight in the morning, encamped on the right bank of the river, near Begramee. They had had a sharp skirmish with the enemy, and had left fifty of their

comrades dead or dying on the snow. Though their march had covered only five or six miles, their experiences had been such as to fill the minds of the generals with the gloomiest apprehensions of future disaster. Dying wretches, stricken by the terrible cold, lay huddled up in the roadway. The feeble children of India, unused to so severe a climate, perished like flies. Even the Sepoys fell on the line of march, but, preserving the instincts of discipline, awaited death in silence. Major Pottinger had advised that all the old horse clothing, and similar material, should be cut into strips, and rolled around the feet and ankles of the soldiers, after the Afghan fashion, as a protection against the snow. But this simple precaution was ignored by the authorities; and in a few hours the frost did its cruel work effectually.

To some extent, though necessarily on a smaller scale, the British retreat copied the painful features of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Here is Sir John Kaye's vigorous description of its more painful incidents:—

'The night,' he says, 'was one of suffering and horror. The snow lay deep on the ground. There was no order—no method in anything that was done. The different regiments encamped anywhere. Soldiers and camp-followers were huddled together in one inextricable mass of suffering humanity. Horses, camels, and baggage ponies were mixed up confusedly with them. Nothing had been done to render more endurable the rigour of the northern winter. The weary wretches lay down to sleep,—some never rose again; others awoke to find themselves crippled for life by the biting frost.

'The morning dawned, and without any orders, without any attempt to restrain them, the camp-followers and baggage struggled on ahead, and many of the Sepoys went with them. Discipline was fast disappearing. The regiments were dwindling down to the merest skeletons. It was no

longer a retreating army; it was a rabble in chaotic flight. The enemy were pressing on our rear, seizing our baggage, capturing our guns, cutting up all in their way. Our soldiers, weary, feeble, and frost-bitten, could make no stand against the fierce charges of the Afghan horsemen. It seemed that the whole rear guard would be speedily cut off. All thoughts of effectual resistance were at an end. There was nothing now to be hoped for but from the forbearance of the Afghan chiefs.'

Had this ill-fated army pushed on with full speed, and cleared the mountain passes, it is possible that a considerable number of lives might have been saved. But, with strange indifference to the critical nature of his position, the general halted the second night at Batkah. Akbar then appeared on the scene with 600 horsemen, and demanded additional hostages as security for the evacuation of Jellalabad. Major Pottinger and Captains Lawrence and Colin Mackenzie, were placed in his hands, and the doomed army resumed its fatal march, entering the stupendous mountain-gorge of the Khurd-Kabul. Seldom is this rugged ravine, throughout its five miles of rocky sinuosities, visited by the rays of the sun; and in its gloom brawls a mountain torrent, which the road crosses and re-crosses eight-and twenty times. Within its jaws the confused mass of soldiers and camp-followers was attacked by the fanatical Ghilzees, who openly disobeyed the commands of Akbar Khan; and there three thousand poor wretches, it is said, perished by the enemy's fire, or fell from sheer exhaustion, and were butchered by Afghan knives. Painful it is to remember through these bloody shambles rode delicately-nurtured English ladies, on horseback or in camel-panniers, vainly endeavouring to keep watch over their children, and losing them too often in the wild disorder of the interrupted march.

Weary and hungry, the fugitives passed another night in the snow. In the morning reappeared Akbar Khan,

offering a supply of provisions, and advising the general to halt. In spite of the remonstrances of Brigadier Shelton and his officers, he adopted the insidious counsel and wasted an entire day, when a swift march could have carried the troops clear of the mountain snows. Akbar also offered to take charge of the English ladies and their children, and convey them to Peshawar; and as this seemed the best chance of their speedy deliverance, the offer was accepted. Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, nine other ladies, and fifteen children, together with eight married officers, were given into his hands. Thus they had the good fortune to escape the calamity that befell so many of their countrymen.

Next morning, the 10th, the remains of the British force resumed the weary march to Jellalabad. By this time discipline had almost ceased to exist. Soldiers and camp-followers rushed pell-mell to the front. The Sepoys had flung away their muskets, and thought of nothing but flight. Without aim or object they rushed forward despairingly, scarcely knowing wherefore or whether; while ever and anon the Afghans, with their long knives flashing, swept in among the confused and panic-stricken crowd of fugitives, slaying them like sheep. 'A narrow gorge between the precipitous spurs of two hills' became the scene of a hideous massacre, and was soon choked up with the dead and dying. Not a solitary Sepoy survived. The British were reduced to about fifty horse artillerymen, with one howitzer gun, some 250 men of the 44th, and 150 cavalry troopers. Thus, of the 15,000 soldiers and camp-followers who marched out of the Cabul cantonments, three-fourths had perished?

Elphinstone sent an officer to Akbar Khan to reproach him with his breach of faith, and to call upon him to put a stop to the butchery. He professed himself unable to control the Ghilzees, unless the British threw down their arms, and placed themselves under his protection. This last and bitterest drop in the cup of humiliation, of which he had

drank so deeply, Elphinstone refused ; and what was left of the once victorious 'Army of the Indus' slowly descended the steep declivity of the Haft-Kotul into a narrow defile, crowded with the dead bodies of the hapless wretches who had hurried on in advance of the column. The enemy assailed the rear with a heavy fire, until Shelton turned at bay with a few Europeans, and by his courage and energy gained time for the column to get clear of the defile.

On their arrival at Jugdulluk, fresh negotiations were opened with Akbar Khan, who promised to supply the fainting troops with water and provisions, if Generals Elphinstone and Shelton gave themselves up as hostages for the evacuation of Jellalabad. No alternative offered itself, and this final indignity was accepted. But it then appeared that Akbar was really unable to restrain the fanatical fury of the Ghilzees, who heeded neither his promises nor his threats, his entreaties nor his commands. At eight o'clock on the evening of the 12th, the remnant of the army, about 125 men, resumed the fatal march ; but on reaching the Jugdulluk Pass, found its mouth blockaded with a barrier of bushes and branches. In this *impasse* our British soldiers vindicated the old renown of 'the flag' by their stubborn courage, and, though almost overwhelmed by the hostile masses, and hampered by the shrieking crowd of camp-followers, a score of officers and some five-and-forty of the rank and file cut their way through to Gandamuk. There another stand was made; but the diminished band of heroes could not prevail against overpowering odds, and, with the exception of two officers and a few privates, who were taken prisoners, they fell, as English soldiers should fall, sword in hand, and with their faces to the foe.

Meanwhile, seven officers and five privates had pushed on from Surkhab, which lies between Jugdulluk and Gandamuk, in advance of the column. One by one they dropped by the wayside, until their number was reduced to six. These, Captains Bellew, Collyer, and Hopkins, Lieu-

tenant Bird, and Drs Harpur and Brydone, reached Futteh-abad, which is only sixteen miles from Jellalabad, so that their escape seemed certain. Some of the neighbouring peasants, taking pity upon them, came out of their huts, and offered them food. Exhausted and half famished, they halted to partake of it. Unhappily, the delay gave time for the armed inhabitants of the town to sally forth and attack them. Bellew and Bird were immediately cut down. The others rode for their lives, but, with the exception of Dr Brydone, were overtaken, when within four miles of safety.

His deliverance is one of the most pathetic incidents in our military history. A living artist, Mrs Butler, has commemorated it on eloquent canvas, but it still awaits—what, to us, it seems so well to merit—fitting record by our poets.

The English soldiers who kept guard on the ramparts of Jellalabad saw in the distance—about noon on the 17th of January—a solitary horseman, slowly and painfully staggering across the open plain, and wondered among themselves who this jaded traveller might be. As he drew nearer, it became evident that the weary animal he rode could scarcely stumble further on its way, and that he himself was worn and wan, like one who had suffered greatly. A party was sent forth to his assistance. His name was soon known and his tale told—the dark, the appalling tale of the destruction of an army! He was Dr Brydone, and the sole survivor, one hundred and twenty prisoners excepted, of the fifteen thousand fighting-men and camp-followers who, eleven days before, had marched out of Cabul.

The earliest acts of Lord Ellenborough were necessarily directed towards the settlement of affairs in Afghanistan. Lord Auckland had bequeathed to his successor a deplorable legacy—the restoration of the prestige of our arms—in other words, another war of invasion and aggression to undo the evil results of the late iniquitous war. It was supposed to be essential—and perhaps it was—to the security

of our rule in India, that we should chastise the Afghans for having defended their liberties against our unjust encroachments. It has been well said that, 'for purposes of our own—foolish purposes, as it happens—we invaded their country; forced on them a sovereign whom they hated, and who had actually no party among them; invited aggression from them by our weakness and supineness; melted away under their aggression; and at last poured in upon them with overwhelming forces—blew up their strongholds, razed their cities, hunted their mountain population like vermin, burning, slaying, and ravaging; and then withdrew, giving them leave to place upon the throne the very ruler we had come to depose.' In this brief sentence is summed up the whole history of the Afghan War. We did a great wrong, and then set to work to avenge our errors and our mistakes on the people whom we had wronged. There are many black pages in the history of our Indian Empire, but none so black as those which treat of the two Afghan campaigns—the campaign of aggression and the campaign of retribution.

Of the various positions in Afghanistan which, as shown in the preceding pages the invading forces had occupied, Ghiznee alone was surrendered. Though the Cabul division, under Elphinstone, had perished in the mountain-defiles, and only one survivor had reached in safety an English garrison, Candahar was resolutely held by General Nott, and Jellalabad by General Sale, who gallantly sustained a vigorous blockade, in the conviction that a relieving army would be despatched by the Indian authorities. Even before the departure of Lord Auckland, all the troops that could be spared from Northern India had been pushed forward to Peshawar; and Lord Ellenborough, on taking up the reins of office, infused an extraordinary activity into the necessary military operations.

The command of the so-called 'army of retribution,' designed to relieve and bring away our garrisons, and

punish the Afghans for their 'cruelty' and 'treachery,' was entrusted to a very capable officer, General Pollock. He arrived at Peshawar on the 5th of February. Two months later, having spent the interval in collecting reinforcements and improving the discipline of the troops, he left Peshawar, with 8000 men, to undertake the relief of Jellalabad. His line of advance included the formidable Khyber Pass, which no man had ever before traversed in the face of an enemy. It was defended by 10,000 Khyberees, but Pollock's skilful dispositions, and the steady courage of his men, triumphed over their opposition and over the physical obstacles. Dividing his army into three columns, he ordered the right and left wing to scale the heights on either side, and sweep them clear of the enemy, while he led the centre into the pass itself. His plan was as brilliantly executed as it was well conceived. The British infantry clambered up the rugged cliffs, and poured a heavy fire upon the Khyberees, who, surprised and disconcerted, took to flight; while Pollock's column destroyed the barrier erected at the mouth of the pass, and forced its way to Ali Musjid. This splendid feat of arms was accomplished with a loss of only 14 killed, 104 wounded, and 17 missing.

Ali Musjid was attacked and captured on April 6th. Pollock was then in command of the whole stretch of the Khyber and of the road to Jellalabad.

Here we must pause for a moment to glance at the position of affairs in the west. Fierce fighting had not ceased around Candahar, from which the Afghan chiefs made vigorous efforts to expel General Nott. Early in March their investment was felt to be so harassing that the general, leaving a garrison of 2600 men in the city, sallied forth with the rest of his army, and dealt such a crushing blow at the enemy, that, though 12,000 strong, with one half cavalry and well mounted, he compelled them to retreat hastily across the rivers Turnuk and Urgundeh. Following them up, he overtook them on the 9th, and by

an effective use of his artillery, dispersed them in all directions.

During his absence, a strong body of Afghans came suddenly upon Candahar. Major Lane, who had been left in command, made immediate preparations to receive them; but, under cover of the darkness, they contrived to approach and set fire to the Herat gate. The major at once reinforced its defence, and opened a destructive cannonade, which the enemy returned with spirit, while some of the more daring tore down the burning fragments, and contrived to effect an entrance. These, however, were at once bayoneted; and about midnight, after a contention of four hours, in which they suffered severely, the enemy retired. Towards the end of April the security of Candahar was established by the arrival of Brigadier General England and Colonel Agnew with reinforcements.

Turning to Cabul, we find that, after the departure of the British, Shah Soojah for a time held undisturbed sway; but when he quitted the Bala Hissar to take the command of a military expedition, it was seized by the Barukzye Sirdars, and in the conflict that thereupon ensued, Shah Soojah was murdered. His son, Futteh Jung, recovered possession of the Cabul citadel, but, on the approach of Akbar Khan, was compelled to surrender it. He was allowed to retain the title and pomp of Ameer, on condition that the sovereign authority was exercised by Akbar as his vizier. Of this subordinate and shadowy position he soon grew weary, and escaping the surveillance of his 'mayor of the palace,' fled to the camp of General Pollock.

To that veteran commander and his army we now return. Considerable delay was experienced by Pollock through the vacillations of the Governor-General, to which we shall presently refer. After his arrival at Jellalabad on the 16th, his further advance was forbidden, and it was not until the following August that he was permitted to resume operations. Two days before his entry into the town,

General Sale had gained a signal victory over Akbar Khan, which we must not pass unnoticed. Having resolved to attack and break up Akbar Khan's camp, and relieve Jelalabad from the blockade which pressed upon it with such severity, Sale formed his troops into three columns, the centre mustering 500 bayonets, and the right and left about 360 each, with orders to move at daybreak. 'The artillery,' says Sale, 'advanced at the gallop, and directed a heavy fire upon the Afghan centre, whilst two of the columns of infantry penetrated the line near the same point, and the third forced back its left from its support on the river, into the stream of which some of his horse and foot were driven. The Afghans made repeated attempts to check our advance by a smart fire of musketry, by throwing forward heavy bodies of horse, and by opening upon us three guns from a battery screened by a garden wall, and said to have been served under the personal superintendence of the sirdar. But in a short time they were dislodged from every point of their position, their cannon taken, and their camp involved in a general conflagration. The battle was over, and the enemy in full retreat, by about 7 A.M. We have made ourselves masters of two cavalry standards, re-captured four guns lost by the Cabul and Gandamuk forces, the restoration of which to our government is matter of much honest exultation among our troops, seized and destroyed a great quantity of material and ordnance stores, and burnt the whole of the enemy's tents. In short, the defeat of Mohamed Akbar, in open field, by the troops whom he had boasted of blockading, has been complete and signal. The enemy suffered severely. . . . The field of battle was strewn with the bodies of men and horses, and the richness of the trappings of some of the latter seemed to attest that persons of distinction had been among the casualties. The loss on our side was small. Eight privates of the 13th Native Infantry, and two of the 35th Native

Infantry, were killed. Three officers and about fifty men were wounded.'

While our soldiers were thus at issue with their Afghan enemies, Lord Ellenborough's mind was given over to perplexity. He was a man of buoyant spirits and much intellectual exaltation so long as he basked in the sunshine of prosperity; but adverse changes of fortune depressed him greatly. Having received information of a defeat sustained by Brigadier England at Hykulzye and of his retirement upon Quetta, he shrank from the hazard of a second advance into Afghanistan; and, on April 19th, unexpectedly announced to the Commander-in-Chief his resolution to withdraw the armies of Generals Nott and Pollock at the earliest possible date, to the points which would secure their communication with India. Instructions were given to General Nott to evacuate Candahar and retreat to the Indus, after demolishing the defences and blowing up the gateways. The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Jasper Nicholls, who had never approved of the Afghan expedition, was directed to recall General Pollock's army to Peshawar, but the Governor-General thrust upon him the responsibility of determining whether 'the troops, redeemed from the state of peril in which they had been placed in Afghanistan, and it may still be hoped not without the infliction of some severe blow on the Afghan army, it would be justifiable again to put them forward for no other object than that of avenging our losses, and re-establishing our military character in all its original brilliancy.' Sir Jasper Nicholls availed himself of this latitude, to order the immediate withdrawal of General Pollock's army to Peshawar, unless he had brought negotiations for the release of the prisoners to such a climax that they would be endangered by the retirement of the troops, or had reason to expect an attack from Cabul.

General Pollock strenuously represented that their retire-

ment in the then position of affairs would be regarded as a virtual defeat, and would destroy the already shaken prestige of the British arms. He protested also against the abandonment of measures for the recovery of the prisoners. And he added that, for the present, and perhaps for some months, the want of carriage cattle would prevent him from quitting Jellalabad. This ingenious suggestion furnished him with an excuse for holding his ground until, as he hoped, another change in Lord Ellenborough's views permitted his advance. In reply, the Governor-General agreed to his remaining at Jellalabad until October; and Pollock proceeded to make the best use of the time at his disposal by pressing forward negotiations for the ransom of the British prisoners.

When it became known that Lord Ellenborough had ordered the evacuation of Afghanistan, the Anglo-Indian community gave expression to feelings of the strongest indignation. The turmoil had its effect on the mind of the Governor-General, especially as the Court of Directors and the British Government were of opinion that the prisoners should be released by force of arms, and the honour of the flag vindicated, before we retired from the country. But having committed himself to the 'withdrawal policy,' he was seriously at a loss for some device by which to preserve, if only nominally, his reputation for consistency, while he vindicated the fame of the arms of England. That which he finally adopted has not unjustly been described as 'unparalleled, perhaps, in the political history of the world.' He ordered Pollock and Nott to advance, while giving out that this forward movement was really a retirement from Afghanistan. On the 4th of July he despatched two letters to General Pollock and two to General Nott, in which he repeated that the withdrawal of the British armies across the Indus was the main object of his policy, but intimated that Nott, if so disposed, might retire from Candahar by way of Ghiznee, Cabul, and Jellalabad, and that Pollock

might assist the retreat of Nott by moving forward upon Cabul.

'It was fortunate for Lord Ellenborough and for the country,' in Sir John Kaye's opinion, 'that he had to deal at this time with men who thought more of the honour of Great Britain than of their own safety; and who did not shrink from responsibility if, by incurring it, they had a chance of conferring great and lasting benefits upon the government which they served, and the nation which they represented.' They did not refuse to assume the responsibility which Lord Ellenborough unjustly imposed upon them. Confident in the spirit of their fighting-men, provided with adequate equipment, and agreed upon a plan of operations which was to bring both armies to Cabul simultaneously, they prepared to advance.

On the 10th of August, Pollock left Jellalabad at the head of 8000 men. At Jugdulluk he fought a fierce but successful action with the Ghilzees, driving them with great slaughter from heights apparently inaccessible. This severe repulse alarmed the Afghans, and its impression was deepened by the celerity and boldness of Pollock's movements. Despatching his prisoners and hostages into Turkistan, Akbar Khan, with the principal Afghan chiefs and their followers, resolved to encounter the British advance at the pass of Tezeer, which, a few months before, had been the scene of so terrible a massacre. He mustered 16,000 men, and drew them up on ground of considerable strength. On the 13th Pollock came up with them, and resolved on an immediate attack. His soldiers burned with the desire of victorious battle; and it was evident that for all arms there was almost an equal chance of gaining distinction—the cavalry on the plain, the infantry on the hills, which were alive with Afghan marksmen, and the artillery everywhere.

The Afghan horse poured into the valley; whereupon

Pollock let loose his British troopers, who, supported by native cavalry, soon drove them afar in bewildered rout, and pursued them with restless sabres. Our infantry, in the teeth of the Afghan matchlocks, charged up the steep acclivities, and fixing bayonets, rushed at their enemy with a shout that told of coming victory. Bravely as the Afghans met the shock, it proved beyond their strength to resist; and flying from crag to crag, they soon broke their order, and became a disorganised rabble. But when they gained the summit-ridge they feebly rallied, and seeking such covert as the ground afforded, continued the fight, each for his own hand, firing their matchlocks with savage persistency. Desperate was the effort to keep back the sons of England from the heights of the Haft-Kotul; but on that day their stern, resolved courage was not to be denied. They mounted the Haft-Kotul; and on gaining the top of that stupendous ascent broke out into three exultant cheers, well pleased with what they had done that day, as, indeed, they had a right to be.

‘A more decisive victory,’ says Kaye, ‘was never gained. The Afghan chiefs had brought out their best fighting-men against us. They had done their best to turn the difficulties of the country to good account against the strangers. Their people were at home in those tremendous defiles, whilst few of our troops had ever seen them; few were accustomed to the kind of warfare which now alone could avail. There was everything to stir into intense action all the energies of the Barukzye chief and his followers. They were fighting in defence of their hearths and altars; the very existence of the nation was at stake. It was the last hope of saving the capital from the grasp of an avenging army. But with everything to stimulate and everything to aid him, Akbar Khan could offer no effectual resistance to the advance of Pollock’s retributory force. The Afghans were fairly beaten on their own ground, and in their own peculiar style of warfare. It has been often said that our

troops were maddened by the sight of the skeletons of their fallen comrades, and that they were carried on by the irrepressible energy of revenge. It is true that all along the line of country, from Gandamak to Khurd-Kabul, there rose up before the eyes of our advancing countrymen hideous evidence of the January massacre, enough to kindle the fiercest passions in the hearts of the meekest men. But I believe that if no such ghastly spectacles had lain in the path of the advancing army, the forward feeling would have glowed as strongly in the breast of every soldier of Pollock's forces.'

Swiftly and surely the victorious general pressed on to the formidable pass of the Khurd-Kabul. He threw out detachments of infantry to seize the heights, but the enemy, beaten and disheartened, had made no effort to secure them. On the 14th he arrived at Butkhuk; and, next day, pitched his tents on the race ground of Cabul. On the 16th, with his staff, and a strong escort, he entered the Bala-Hissar; and soon, amid ringing cheers and the well-known sounds of England's national anthem, the British standard was planted on its summit.

Our narrative now returns to General Nott.

So soon as he had received Lord Ellenborough's 'permissive' despatch of the 4th of July, and concerted a detailed plan of operations with General Pollock at Jellalabad, Nott prepared 'to retire to India by way of Cabul.' Sending back Brigadier England with a portion of his army and the heavy guns, he evacuated Candahar on the 7th of August, leaving it in the hands of Sudder Jung, the son of Shah Soojah. It may here be noted that the inhabitants witnessed the departure of the British with regret, so admirable had been the conduct, and so perfect the discipline of our troops. Nott met with but little opposition as he advanced upon Ghaznee, where the citadel was found in excellent condition, but the town in a state of ruin. The

fortifications were immediately blown up, and all the timber-work set on fire; the flames which reddened heaven throughout the night proclaiming far and wide the signal vengeance of the British. Here were found the so-called 'gates of Somnauth,' which, according to tradition; had been carried away from their original site at Guzerat to adorn the tomb of Mahmoud. For some romantic but unintelligible reason, or as a bid for popularity among the Hindoos, Lord Ellenborough had ordered General Nott to bring them back to India. 'The work,' says Rawlinson, 'was performed by Europeans, and all possible delicacy was observed in not desecrating the shrine further than was absolutely necessary. The guardians of the tomb, when they perceived our object, retired to one corner of the court, and wept bitterly; and when the removal was effected, they again prostrated themselves before the shrine, and uttered loud lamentations. Their only remark was: 'You are lords of the country, and can of course work your will on us: but why this sacrilege? Of what value can these old timbers be to you? while to us they are as the breath of our nostrils.' The reply was: 'The gates are the property of India; taken from it by one conqueror, they are restored to it by another. We leave the shrine undesecrated, and merely take our own.'

Writing at the time, Sir Henry Rawlinson adds: 'The sensation is less than might have been expected, and no doubt the mullaks, who have had the guardianship of the tomb for generations in their family, will be the chief sufferers by the measure. I doubt if the Afghan tribes, lately risen from obscurity to power, and holding the country rather as conquerors than citizens, possess that feeling of unity with each other, and identity with the interests they are supposed to protect, to view the abduction of the gates as a material outrage. The act may be made use of by the priesthood to excite fanaticism against us; but if the Barukzye chiefs could only retain their darling plaything, power, they would care little about the gates of Somnauth. With Shah Soojah

the case was different. As the representative of the Sud-dozye family, aiming at the reconsolidation of monarchical power, he could not but view the demand of Runjeet Singh for the gates as a national indignity, powerfully affecting his own personal and political interests. At present, religious excitement is alone to be apprehended from our carrying off these trophies. I call them trophies, although assured that they are spurious, for the belief in their genuineness is, politically considered, the same as if they really were so.'

Carrying with him these singular memorials of conquest, General Nott continued his march to Cabul. On approaching Maidan, he encountered a large force of Afghans, under the principal chiefs, strongly posted on the heights. He spent the 14th and 15th of September in driving them from their commanding positions, and, having completely broken down their defence, continued his march to Cabul, where he found General Pollock.

Pollock's first object, after the occupation of the capital had been accomplished, was the release of the British prisoners. Officers and ladies, with their children, had been suddenly removed from Cabul on the 25th of August, and compelled to travel day and night, without an interval of repose, and insufficiently clothed and fed, to Bameean, on the other side of the snow-shrouded Hindoo Kush. Sir Richmond Shakespear, the general's military secretary, was immediately sent forward, with 600 troopers, to overtake them; and was followed next day by a brigade of infantry, under Sir Robert Sale. Now, the commander of the Afghan escort, a certain Saleh Mohammed, who had deserted from the native army in the previous year, was shrewdly suspected to be by no means incorruptible; and offers of a lakh of rupees were made to him if he would hand over the captives. At first the bait seemed to have no attraction for him. But, on the 11th, he made known to Major Pottinger and Captains Johnson and Lawrence that he had received a

letter from Akbar Khan ordering him to place the prisoners in charge of the Usbeg chief of Khulum. As this was equivalent to condemning them for life to confinement among ignorant and savage barbarians, they were overcome with grief, until Saleh added that he had also received a message from the Moonshee, Mohun Lall, at Cabul, that General Pollock was willing to pay him a gratuity of £2000 and a monthly payment of £100, if the prisoners were delivered up. He knew nothing, he said, of General Pollock, but would be quite satisfied if Major Pottinger guaranteed the offer he had received. The proposal was joyfully accepted; and all the prisoners hastened to sign an obligation to provide the requisite funds, according to the measure of their capability. Vigorous action was immediately taken by Major Pottinger. With the utmost coolness he deposed the governor of Bameean, and appointed in his stead a friendlier chief. To supply the immediate wants of himself and his fellow-prisoners, he levied contributions on a party of Loharree merchants who were passing through the town. He issued proclamations, calling upon all the neighbouring chiefs to come in and make their salaam. He granted remissions of taxation, and expended all the decent clothes belonging to the party in gifts of *Khelats*, or dresses of honour. It may be doubted whether the superiority of race, and the influence of a man of strong will, accustomed to rule, was ever more strikingly manifested.

The final deliverance of the prisoners is thus described by Pottinger in his despatch to General Pollock:—

‘On September 16th we marched to Tophee Bala, and encamped with the castle in our front, so that we could occupy it, if need be. On the morning of the 17th I received a letter from Sir Richmond Shakespear, informing me that he had reached Siv-i-Cheshmeh with 610 Kuzzilbash horse, to our aid. We immediately crossed the Kalie Pass, and marched to the castle of Mur Morad Beg, near the foot of the Hajghah Pass, where we were joined

by Sir Richmond Shakespear with the Kuzzilbash horsemen, who had marched ninety miles from Cabul over that mountainous country in two marches. The 18th being supplied with seventy-seven horses of the Kuzzilbash and twelve by the Hazarchs, we managed to march to Gurdendwab; at that place we learned that a body of horse and foot from the Shekhali and Gherebund districts had marched on Kalu to intercept us. On the 19th, with the same assistance as before, we marched to Thikanch, where we heard that the pass of Sufeyd Khak was occupied by the Afghans, intending to check us. Sir R. Shakespear immediately wrote to request that the British officer—who, report also told us, was advancing in that direction—would occupy the pass, and to say we would if opposed, hold out in some of the castles about, till relieved. On the morning of the 20th, we marched, and found the cavalry of Sir A. Sale's detachment at Koto Ashru, and his infantry holding the heights, and had the pleasure of joining his camp at Urghendeh, whence I proceeded with Major-General Nott's camp, and remaining there during the night, joined yours this morning. I have given the Hazarch chiefs, who joined us at first, remissions on their revenue, and on our march back I paid for the necessary supplies to the party by orders on the revenue to the amount of the supplies furnished.'

Among the captives thus happily delivered were Lady Sale and her daughter, and their meeting with General Sale was an incident of such deep pathos that grey-bearded men shed tears as they witnessed it. The entire company arrived in camp on the evening of the 21st, and were received with a royal salute and a welcome of the most enthusiastic character. They included General Shelton—General Elphinstone had died in captivity in the preceding April—Colonel Palmer, Majors Pottinger and Griffiths, twelve captains, three surgeons, nine lieutenants, three ensigns, and twenty-eight non-commissioned officers and privates. The females were Ladies Macnaghten and Sale, besides the wives of five

officers and three privates. There remained only Captain Bygrave, who had been detained by Akbar Khan; but he, too, arrived on the 27th, with a despatch from that formidable chief.

By this time the remnants of the Afghan army had collected in the Highlands of the Kohistan, north of Cabul, where, under Anim-ullah Khan, they resolved to protract the struggle. General Pollock determined, therefore, to dislodge them from their fastnesses, and prevent their reappearing in such numbers as to threaten danger. He ascertained that they had concentrated upon Istalif—a town of considerable importance, beautifully situated in a genial and peaceful valley, and accessible only across ranges of heights, separated by deep ravines, and covered with orchards, gardens, and vineyards, which afforded admirable shelter for the Afghan marksmen. General Pollock despatched a division against their centre, under General M'Caskill; but the plan of battle was really conceived and directed by Captain (afterwards Sir Henry) Havelock. The troops, in two divisions, advanced with admirable regularity in the teeth of violent and incessant musketry, until, uniting in one column, they attacked the village of Ismillah, which constituted the key of the enemy's position. It was carried with a rush; and then, pouring onwards, our fighting-men made themselves masters successively of all the garden enclosures, the forts, the heights, the suburbs, and finally, of the town. The women and children in affrighted groups hastened to escape up the mountain acclivities, where they were not pursued. But if bodies of armed men attempted to rally on the distant heights, some guns were dragged up the narrow paths, and brought to bear upon them. The success of the attack was complete. The Afghan army ceased to exist; their last fortress was demolished; and the campaign of retribution was at an end. Akbar and the other chiefs principally involved in the insurrection had fled across the frontier, and sought

refuge in Turkistan; the prisoners had been recovered; the prestige of the British flag was abundantly vindicated, and as winter was rapidly approaching, the generals resolved on the evacuation of the country. Futteh Jung, the son of Shah Soojah, had seated himself on the throne; but, with the wisdom born of experience, the British had carefully refrained from promising their support, and when it was found that the Kazzilbashes and other chiefs preferred his younger brother, Shah Poora, they did not attempt to oppose them. Before quitting the capital, Pollock resolved to mark, in an emphatic way, the retributive spirit in which the British had, for a second time, occupied it. At the solicitation of the friendly chiefs, he agreed to spare the Bala Hissar, but he razed to the ground the great Bazar, where the mutilated remains of Sir William Macnaghten had been exposed to the gaze of the mob. Such was the solidity of its construction, that it would yield only to gunpowder, and its demolition occupied two days. Strenuous efforts were made to save the city from injury; but the fury of the soldiers and the camp-followers, whose worst passions had been excited, would not brook control.

‘That many excesses were then committed,’ says Kaye, ‘is not to be denied. The principal gates of the city were guarded; but there were many other points of ingress, and our people streamed into the streets of Cabul, applied the firebrand to the houses, and pillaged the shops. Guilty and innocent alike fell under the heavy hand of the lawless retribution which was now to descend upon the inhabitants of Cabul. Many unoffending Hindoos, who, lulled into a sense of delusive security, by the outward re-establishment of a government, had returned to the city and re-opened their shops, were disastrously ruined. In the mad excitement of the hour friend and foe were stricken down by the same unsparing hands. Even the Chundarwal—where dwelt the friendly Kuzzilbashes—narrowly escaped destruction. Such

excesses as were committed during the last three days of our occupation of Cabul must ever be deplored, as all human weakness and wickedness are to be deplored. But when we consider the amount of temptation and provocation; when we remember that the comrades of our soldiers and the brethren of our camp-followers had been foully butchered by thousands in the passes of Afghanistan; when everywhere tokens of our humiliation, and of the treachery and cruelty of the enemy, rose up before our people, stinging them past all endurance, and exasperating them beyond all control, we wonder less that when the guilty city lay at their feet, they should not wholly have ruined it in their passions, than that, in such an hour, they should have given them so little heed.'

On the 11th of October, the 'army of retribution' began its homeward march in three divisions; the van commanded by General Pollock, the centre commanded by General M'Caskill, and the rear by General Nott. A light corps under General Sale was thrown forward in advance, to clear the road, and occupy the heights of the Khurd-Kabul Pass. Pollock's division arrived at Jugdulluk on the 16th, having met with little annoyance from the enemy. General M'Caskill, however, was engaged in several skirmishes, while General Nott was delayed by the exhaustion of his baggage-cattle, of which numerous bodies of Ghilzees took advantage to deliver several fierce attacks. They were of course repulsed, but not without a total loss of twelve killed and forty-nine wounded.

From Jugdulluk the march of the three divisions was so regulated as to leave a day's interval between each of them; and they arrived at Jellalabad on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th in succession. Three days were spent in demolishing the fortifications of that famous 'place of arms.' On the 27th General Pollock resumed his march, followed on the 29th by

McCaskill and Nott. The passes were cleared with all possible expedition. McCaskill and Nott experienced some annoyance from the Khyberees, having omitted to adopt General Pollock's precaution, and occupy the heights on either flank before entering the defile. At night, therefore, the Khyberees attacked the rear, and a sharp contention ensued, in which we lost two officers, a considerable number of men, and a couple of guns, which however, were recaptured on the following day.

Having destroyed the fortress of Ali Musjid, the three divisions pushed on to Peshawar, where they were reunited. On the 17th of November they crossed the Indus at Attock, and, traversing the Punjab by easy marches, arrived at Ferozepur, where the Governor-General received them with the splendid ceremonial in which his soul delighted. A few days previously he had issued a proclamation to the rulers and peoples of India, which acquired an unfortunate celebrity from its inflated language and bombastic reference to the gates of the Temple of Somnauth being brought back from Ghiznee. Both in England and India it met with general condemnation; some taking offence at its apparent patronage of idolatry; others showing that, if it flattered the prejudices of the Hindoos, it insulted those of the Mahommedans. In this State Paper, Lord Ellenborough further made it known that the Afghans, in the hands of the Anglo-Indian Government, would immediately be set at liberty. Among the prisoners who thus obtained their release was Dost Mohamed, who, soon afterwards, set out on his return to his whilom kingdom; so that, as it was bitterly said, all things reverted to the old order, and oceans of treasure had been scattered, and thousands of gallant lives sacrificed, with no other result than to embitter the Afghans against the British name.

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END OF BOOK II

BOOK III—THE VICTORIAN ERA

CHAPTER I

THE WAR IN SCINDE

THE extensive province of Scinde is bounded on the north by Baluchistan and the Punjab ; on the east, by Rajputana, on the west by Baluchistan ; and on the south by the Arabian Sea, while it is separated from Cutch by the broad inlet of the Great Western Runn. Its inhabitants consist chiefly of Juts and Baluchis. In 711 it was subdued by the Khalif Abd-ul-Mulek, and for some centuries it remained a portion of the Mohammedan empire. In 1756 it was conquered by the Afghans. Seventy-three years later the Baluchis recovered their independence, and raised their leader, the chief of the Talpur tribe, to the sovereign authority. To secure his dynasty he divided considerable domains among his brothers and kinsmen, with the result that at Haidarabad there were four nobles or ameers, one at Murpur, and three at Khyapur. In this division originated the anomalous order of succession that obtained among them, the *rais puggree* or turban of superior rule descending in each family to the brother instead of the eldest son.

The gradual extension of their territories brought the Ameers up to the frontiers of British India, and gave them, moreover, complete command of the navigation of the Indus. Commercial intercourse with them was very limited until, in 1831, Sir Alexander Burnes ascended the Indus on his embassy to the court of Runjeet Singh at Lahore. Said a Baluchi soldier to Burnes, when his boat ploughed the waters of the great river,—‘The mischief is done: you have seen our country!’ Treaties were concluded with the Ameers in 1832 and 1834, each of them extorting some concession from the reluctant Ameers, and another in 1838, provided for the permanent residence of a British political agent at Haidarabad.

When Lord Auckland initiated the unhappy Afghan war he decided that a British army should occupy Skiapur, and also insisted that the Ameers should pay to his puppet-sovereign, Shah Soojah, a sum of money in discharge of certain claims which the latter put forward. This was in 1829. Three years of calm followed; the Ameers gave free passage to British troops and stores, and supplied our ships and steamers on the Indus with fuel and provisions. The disaster at Cabul, and the retreat and destruction of General Elphinstone’s army shook the belief of the Ameers in our invincibility, and two or three allowed their feelings of hostility to become evident. Lord Ellenborough, never wanting in decision, though frequently deficient in judgment, immediately declared his intention of inflicting heavy punishment, even to the confiscation of his territory, on any Ameer who proved false to the Indian Government; though he added that this faithlessness must be clearly proved, and not provoked by the conduct of the British agents.

In 1842 the command of the troops in Baluchistan, and in Upper and Lower Scinde, was bestowed upon General Sir Charles Napier, a soldier of wide experience, unbounded energy, and brilliant military capacity, whose great qualities,

however, were marred by his vehement temper and the strength of his personal prejudices. During his command of the Bombay army he had done much to improve its discipline and moral tone, and had deeply impressed the natives by his intrepidity and iron strength of character. A remarkable instance of his moral courage is related by his biographer. He was present at a public festival, when a Hindoo sword player, or juggler, offered to cut an orange in halves on a man's hand, which should not even be scratched. Napier offered his right hand for the trial, but after close examination the swordsman refused it; he presented the left hand, and it was acknowledged to be rightly formed: still the performer was evidently nervous, and disinclined to display his skill on a man of such high rank. Napier gravely insisted; and at last, the swordsman, drawing a deep breath, struck, and severed the orange. The skin of the great soldier's hand was slightly touched, but no blood drawn. The native mind was deeply impressed by this cool contempt of danger.

Lord Ellenborough sent Napier into Scinde with full authority to take such action, political or military, as circumstances might seem to him to require. There can be little doubt but that he went with a preconceived conviction of the faithlessness of the Ameers, and a determination to annex their country to our Indian empire. At all events he had scarcely arrived at Sukkur before he declared that the treaty had been violated, and insisted that a new and more stringent one should be concluded, by which the Ameers were to be deprived of their privilege of coining money, and the towns of Sukkur, Bukkur, and Roree, with some other territory, were to be ceded to the British. Mur Rustum, the aged prince of Upper Scinde, if left to act of his own volition would probably have consented; but he was secretly instigated to refuse by Ali Mourad, the prince of Lower Scinde, who meanwhile, was privately plotting to overthrow him and secure his inheritance, and representing

himself to Napier as devoted to the British interests. A subtle web of intrigue was craftily woven, until Mourad, by his ingenious deceptions, persuaded Rustum to abandon his palace, and escape to the Baluchi camp at Dingee.

Incensed at this indication of mistrust, Napier hastened to issue a proclamation by which he recognised Ali Mourad as head of the Ameers of Scinde, though he was not without strong suspicion that the latter had been playing a double game. At the same time he decided upon a military movement which should convince the Baluchis of the irresistible power of a British army. This was nothing less than the capture of the desert fortress of Emamghur, which all Scinde believed to be as impregnable as the battlements of Heaven. 'I am fully aware,' he wrote, 'of the danger of these marches in the Desert, but they may be done; where one man goes, another can, and until I prove to these Ameers they can go nowhere without my following them, they will think their Desert a safe retreat, and Scinde will never be quiet.'

It was reported that a large force of Baluchis was assembled on the borders of the desert; but in order to lessen the difficulty of conveying supplies, Napier resolved to take with him only a handful of troops—200 irregular cavalry, and 350 foot of the 22nd regiment, whom he had mounted on camels. Ten camels carried provisions, and eighty skin-bags of water. This was the expedition which, on the 3rd of January, 1843, marched out of Sukkur to plunge into the wild and lonely desert.

'His guide might be false,' says the historian, 'and lead him astray; Ali Mourad might prove a traitor; the wells might be poisoned or filled up, or the water-skins might be cut in the night by a prowling emissary. The skirts of the waste were swarming with thousands of Baluchi horsemen, who might surround him on the march; and the Amirs had many more and better camels than he had upon which to mount their infantry. Emamghur, the object to be attained

was strong, well provided, and the garrison alone four times his number! To look at these dangers with a steady eye, to neglect no precautions, but, discarding fear, to brave them and the privations of the unknown desert, was the work of a master-spirit in war, or the men of ancient days have been falsely and idly called great.'

For eight days Napier marched his little army through the wilderness. For hundreds of miles bare and dreary sand-hills stretched away to the north and south, breaking up into parallel ridges, with slightly rounded summits, and marked with a thousand regular wrinkles, like the sea-sand's ripples after a placid tide. In height, and breadth, and steepness they varied considerably, but their surface presented a remarkable uniformity. 'The sand was mixed with shells, and ran in great streams, like a network of rivers, skirted on either side by parallel bites of soil, which fed a thin and scattered jungle. At first, as they moved along, the soldiers noticed the occasional tracks of hyænas, and wild boars, and small deer; but these soon disappeared, and the hideous solitude of the desert seemed to petrify around them.'

On the 6th of January Napier writes:—'This part, which has never before been penetrated by Europeans, is sandy, with brushwood, tamarisks chiefly, and another shrub without leaves, a blighted-looking bush.'

On the 9th:—'This march eleven miles; the road hilly, sand deep, but we arrived safe, and are in a punch-bowl, or small plain, without an opening: with rain we should be quickly flooded. I dug nine wells—good water in all—had we failed there was plenty on the camels. Our march to-morrow begins with a very steep sand-hill, and very deep: I turned out the 22nd soldiers this evening, and they ran the guns up it with cheers in five minutes, though from bottom to top it is not less than four hundred yards! What fellows British soldiers are, all laughing and joking, and such strength!'

On the 10th . . . 'A wild place, very little food for camels; one well which we exhausted quickly, but plenty on the camels; more sand hills, and hard labour to get along.'

January 12 . . . 'Emamghur. Desperate sand hills; the whole march of ten miles over a sea of sand! The fortress evacuated!'

On the 13th . . . 'The sands we passed yesterday, indeed for the last two or three days, were very wild and deep; yesterday it was like a sea, or rather like a vast plain of round hills and grotesque-shaped ground, deeply covered with drifted sand, channelled or ribbed with little lines like sand on the sea-shore, and full of shells.'

Emamghur had been abandoned by its garrison two days before the arrival of Napier and his fighting men, into whose hands fell all its stores of grain and powder. The fortress proved to be square-built, with a square tower in the centre fifty feet high, constructed of well-burned bricks. This was surrounded by walls, forty feet high, strengthened with eight round towers, and beyond these was another strong wall, fifteen feet high. After blowing up this formidable stronghold, Napier returned to the Indus, having accomplished an exploit of the most remarkable character, which deserves a foremost place in the annals of military adventure.

BATTLE OF MEANEE, *February 17, 1843*

Open war between the British and the Baluchis was hastened by an attack upon the British Residency at Haidarabad on the 15th of February. It was not possible to allow an act of hostility like this to go unpunished, without risk of weakening the fame and character of England throughout all India. Sir Charles Napier was equal to the occasion; he moved swiftly, and he struck heavily. On the

morning of the 16th, he arrived at Muttaree, where he ascertained the Amirs and their army were posted at Meanee, about ten miles distant. Writing to a friend on the same day, he announces his determination to attack them: 'To-morrow,' he says, 'I march towards Meanee, where, report says, that the Amirs have 30,000 men, but have not the pluck to lead them in person. I march at midnight, and may begin the battle sooner than the tribes, who have sworn on the Koran to destroy us. Expect I can take into action about 2800 men and 12 guns; they have about the same number of guns, but their cavalry is called 20,000, and on a smooth plain; mine are about 802—long odds, but to-morrow or the day after we shall know each other's value.' In his journal he makes entry: 'My troops are in high spirits; so am I. Not to be anxious about attacking such immensely superior numbers is impossible; but it is a delightful anxiety. Three hours I have to get some sleep, and, at nine o'clock to-morrow, my gallant soldiers shall be launched against these brave Baluchis! It is my first battle as a commander: it may be my last. At sixty that makes but little difference; but as my feelings are, it shall be do or die. Beaten, I could not show my face, unless the fault was with the troops.'

I do not know that I can make the movements of the battle intelligible to my readers. To non-military readers a battle necessarily seems a confused medley, in which regiments march to and fro, and foes attack one another, and this side wins and that side loses, for no very obvious reason. It is taken for granted, however, that the victory goes with the best soldiers and the best generals, unless there is a glaring disparity of numbers. Certainly, at Meanee, it was skill and courage that carried off the victory, and this, too, in the face of tremendous odds. The position occupied by the Baluchis, on the morning of the 17th of February, was one of great strength. For twelve hundred yards their front lined the deep nullah, or dry bed, of the river Fullailee,

which, with its high bank sloping towards the plain beyond, furnished a solid defence. Each flank was screened by a shikargah, or wooded jungle, which afforded excellent shelter for infantry. Behind the shikargah on the right, the river made a sudden bend, so as to form a deep loop, within which the enemy had placed their camp and cavalry.

After examining this position, Sir Charles, who had formed his line of battle about nine o'clock, decided that to attack the enemy on either flank would be very hazardous, and must expose his little army to severe loss. He resolved, therefore, to break through the centre. His camp-followers, animals of burden, and baggage, he posted in a circle, close behind his line of battle; then, surrounding it with the camels, which were made to crouch down with their heads inwards, he placed the waggons between them, and in this way constructed a kind of breastwork or rampart, over which the armed followers might ply their muskets. As a baggage-guard he detached 250 cavalry and four companies of infantry; with the remainder of his force, 1780 rank and file, he meant to win the victory. On the right he threw out some skirmishers, and posted a battery of twelve guns. His left was guarded by Colonel Jacob's Irregular Cavalry, and the 9th Bengal Cavalry. The infantry consisted of the 22nd Queen's, the 25th, and 12th native regiments, and the 1st Grenadiers.

Napier gave the word to advance, and accompanied by his staff, galloped forward under a swift musketry fire. The Baluchi right centre was protected by the village of Kaltree, which was filled with fighting men, and virtually impregnable. But on the left his keen eye detected a weak point, by which he immediately profited. On this flank the shikargah was enclosed by a wall, with one narrow opening, or gateway, through which, it was clear, the Baluchis intended to pour in overwhelming strength on the British flank and rear. On examining this wall, it was

seen to be nine or ten feet high, and to have no loopholes through which the enemy could fire. Napier, therefore, sent the Grenadier company of the 22nd to fill the gap, informing their brave captain, Law, that he was to stand there, and block it up; to die, if need be, but never to give way. Faithful to his trust, Law held his post firmly; he died there, but he did not give way; the opening was heroically defended; and some eighty cool, intrepid men thus courageously checked the action and prevented the movement of fully 6000.

Both sides were firing at one another heavily, when the 22nd reached the Fullailee with a run, and, encouraged by their general, clambered up the slope, and stood upon its summit. The prospect before them was one to daunt the bravest:—‘Thick as standing corn, and gorgeous as a field of flowers, stood the Baluchis in their many-coloured garments and turbans; they filled the broad deep bed of the Fullailee; they clustered on both banks and covered the plain beyond. Guarding their heads with their large dark shields, they shook their sharp swords, beaming in the sun; their shouts rolled like a peal of thunder, as with frantic gestures they rushed forward, and fell against the front of the 22nd—dashed with demoniac strength and ferocity. But with shouts as loud, and shrieks as wild and fierce as theirs, and hearts as big and arms as strong, the Irish soldiers met them with that queen of weapons, the musket, and sent their foremost masses rolling back in blood.’

Such was the crushing pressure of the masses of the enemy, that, with all their heroism, the 22nd wavered twice, and twice were rallied by their lion-hearted general. The 25th Native Infantry thrice gave way, for the Baluchis fought with brilliant courage, and had the advantage of numbers. To keep their men in heart the European officers had to expose themselves unshrinkingly, so that nearly every one was killed or wounded. ‘For three hours and a

half,' says Napier, 'we were only one yard apart, man to man; fearful odds, and they fought like heroes. Covered by their shields they ran upon us, sword in hand, with desperate fury. But down they went under the musket and bayonet.' Gradually the superior discipline, the better weapons, and the stronger will of the British, prevailed; and detecting signs of weariness and despondency among the Baluchis, Napier suddenly let loose his horsemen. With a yell and a rush, they crossed the Fullailee, broke on the staggering enemy with carbine and sabre, attacking them on flank and rear. Tremendous was the effect of this impetuous, furious dash; the masses of Baluchis reeled from right to left with a kind of simultaneous motion. The battle was won: stricken with terror, the dusky-faced foe took to flight; and after a brief pursuit, the victors rested for the night upon the hard-fought field. Their loss in killed and wounded was 256; that of the enemy exceeded 6000.

BATTLE OF DUBBA (OR HAIDARABAD)

With the energy that marked his character, Napier proceeded to follow up his success. He sent a message to the Ameers that unless they immediately surrendered he would storm Haidarabad; and by this time they knew him well enough to be sure that he would keep his word. They submitted; gave up their fortress, and laid at the general's feet their jewelled swords, which, with a Napier-like touch of chivalrous feeling, he returned. On the 20th the proud ensign of old England waved from the summit of the great round tower of Haidarabad; a royal salute was fired, and the victorious soldiery, who had acquired no small amount of booty, lifted up their voices in a rolling British cheer. Napier then resolved to proceed against Sheer Mohamed, 'the lion of Meerpur,' who was known to have a large army in the field, and until this was defeated and dispersed, he knew that his

conquest could not be considered complete. Reinforcements having arrived from Sukkur, he was able to place a garrison of 1000 men in Haidarabad, after which he encamped, with 2800 men, on the bank of the Indus, to wait until he should be strong enough to assume the offensive.

The battalions hurried up to his assistance about the middle of March rendered him, in his own opinion and in that of his men, equal to any force the enemy could bring into the field. At the head of 5000 fighting men, 1100 of whom were cavalry, he marched against Sheer Mohamed, who, with 25,000 Baluchis, was posted at Dubba, six miles from the capital, and arrived in front of the enemy on the morning of the 24th. Their position was very strong, The Fullailee and a breadth of jungle on their right, a small wood on their left; and, in front, a nullah, or dry water course, eight feet deep, with high banks scooped so as to form a parapet. The cavalry were gathered up in a cloud behind the left wing, and behind the right stood the village of Dubba, the houses of which had been loopholed and were filled with men. Nor was this all. Between the first line of the right and centre and the village, ran a second water-course, or nullah, forty-two feet wide and seventeen feet deep, with its bank scarped and prepared like the first.

The battle on the part of the British began with a heavy cannonade against the enemy's centre, which soon showed symptoms of confusion. Sir Charles then threw his horse artillery, sustained by two regiments of cavalry, on their right flank. His men charged with irresistible courage, their different war cries ringing loud and shrill, their sabres whirling above their heads in shining circles, charged again and again, until the Baluchis, horsemen and footmen, were driven into swift flight, and ridden down for several miles. Meantime, the 22nd regiment, with musket and bayonet, stormed the first nullah, driving the dark skinned warriors into the second and deeper nullah, which was also carried, but not without grievous loss. The general himself was in

the thick of the fighting, the hilt of his sword was broken by a bullet, and he was so close to a Baluchi magazine which exploded that his clothes were singed ; yet he escaped without a wound. The attack was followed up by the 2nd brigade, supported by the fire of a field battery ; on the right were the 8th and 1st ; the two divisions advanced with the regularity of a parade, and carried the village in gallant style. The Baluchis then gave way in all directions, some following the line to the desert, more making for the Indus, in order to cross that river, and take refuge on the right bank ; but our troopers interposed between them and the cultivated country, and scattered them towards the wilderness.

When Sir Charles returned with the horsemen of his left wing from the pursuit, he was received by his soldiers with a burst of cheering, in honour of his conduct as a commander, and his personal bravery in this bloody three hours' battle. The Baluchis lost about 5000 killed, besides twenty-seven standards and fifteen guns. The loss of the British was 270 men and officers, of whom no fewer than 147 belonged to the gallant 22nd.

The general was not less ready and vigorous in gathering the fruits of victory than he was in fighting for them. Finding that 'the Lion' had retreated towards Meerpur, he set his troops again in motion, and, under a blazing sun, resumed the pursuit. Next day his horsemen were at the gates of Meerpur, forty miles from the battle-field ! Astonished by the swift action of his adversary, Sheer Mohamed fled in all haste to Omercote, his fortress in the desert ; but was closely followed by Napier, though the heat was intense, and the waters of the Indus were rising in his rear. Again the Ameer took to flight, and Omercote was garrisoned by a British detachment, just two days after the Battle of Dubba (or Haidarabad), though one hundred miles distant, and in the heat of a sandy wilderness. 'These operations,' as the historian remarks, 'could not have been

successfully conducted without astonishing exertions and resolution, which finely illustrated the character of the troops, and displayed the spirit which their general had awakened in them. On one of these long marches, which were almost continual, the 25th Sepoys, being nearly maddened by thirst and heat, saw a water-carrier approaching with full skins of water; they rushed towards him in impetuous crowds, tearing away the skins and struggling together, with loud cries of 'Water! Water!' At that moment, some half-dozen straggling soldiers came up, apparently exhausted, and asked for a draught. At once the generous Indians withheld their hands from the skins, forgot their own sufferings, and gave the fainting Europeans to drink; then they all moved on, the Sepoys carrying the 22nd men's muskets for them, patting them on the shoulders, and encouraging them to hold out. It was in vain; they did so for a short time, but soon fell. It was then discovered that these noble fellows were all wounded—some deeply; but thinking there was to be another fight, they had concealed their hurts, and forced nature to sustain the loss of blood, the pain of wounds, the burning sun, the long marches, and the sandy desert, that their last moments might be given to their country on another field of battle. The officers were worthy of the men and of their commander. It was a grand and touching spectacle to see the poor soldiers displaying such heroism, and the young officers, full of fire and intelligence, gathering about their veteran leader, offering to him in service that hardihood which no fatigue will break down; that resolution which no danger could appal; that nervous strength and courage in battle before which no army could stand; yet acknowledging that none among them endured more labour of body and mind than he, their aged chief. For his victories were not gained lightly; nor was his the generalship that required hundreds of camels from the public service to carry his personal baggage; he did not direct the marches from a luxurious palanquin.

appearing only when the battle was commenced. Five camels, purchased at his own cost, carried all the baggage and records of his head quarters; and all day the soldiers saw him on horseback engaged with field objects, while his staff knew that far into the night he was engaged in the administrative duties. Seldom did he sleep more than five hours. But none could know the extent of deep and painful meditation which, amidst all this activity and labour, enabled him to judge clearly of affairs, and organize with so much simplicity the means of winning these glorious battles, and conquering so great a kingdom.

After the capture of Omercote, the general formed his army into flying columns, with which he hunted down the scattered bands of Baluchis that still kept the field—dispersing them one after the other, and rapidly stamping out the centres of resistance. So that he was able to announce to Lord Ellenborough the complete submission of Scinde, which, soon afterwards, was formally annexed to the British Empire.

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CHAPTER II

THE WARS WITH THE SIKHS

I.—*The Campaign of 1845-46.*

THE Punjab, or 'five rivers,'—so named from the five affluents of the Indus that fertilise it with their waters, the Chewab, Ravee, Jhelum, Beas, and Sutlej,—is an extensive territory in the north-west of India, bounded by the Sutlej on the east and south, by Kashmir on the north, and on the west by the Suliman mountains. Its inhabitants belong to various races, the Juts, Rajputs, Goojurs, and Pataurs: two-thirds are Mohammedans, one-sixth Hindoos, and one-sixth Sikhs. The last named are followers of a gooroo, or teacher, named Nanah, born near Lahore, in 1469, died in 1539. More than a hundred and fifty years later appeared another gooroo, the famous Govind, who preached with great energy the religion of the sword, and converted the Sikhs into a nation or caste of proselytisers. Generations passed away, fraught with many vicissitudes to the Sikhs, but they adhered to the teaching of Govind, and, as their numbers increased, spread victoriously over the whole country from the Jhelum to the Sutlej. Towards the close of the last century an able and

resolute man, named Runjeet Singh ('the lion,') asserted his supremacy over the other chiefs, and in 1799 established himself at Lahore. In 1808 he extended his authority into the northern Punjab, and by 1823 had brought under his rule the three great provinces of Kashmir, Moultan, and Peshawar. Towards the end of his reign the relations between the Indian Government and himself became distinctly 'strained,' but he avoided an open rupture, and even sent an auxiliary force to assist the British army in its invasion of Afghanistan. How long the collision of antagonistic interests might have been delayed, we cannot pretend to conjecture; but, happily, perhaps, for his fame, he closed his restless and romantic career in June, 1839. 'He found the Punjab a waning confederacy, a prey to the factions of its chiefs, pressed by the Afghans and the Marathis, and ready to submit to English supremacy. He consolidated the numerous petty states into a kingdom, he wrested from Kabul the fairest of its provinces, and he gave the powerful English no cause for interference. He found the military array of his countrymen a mass of horsemen, brave indeed, but ignorant of war as an art; and he left it mustering 50,000 disciplined soldiers, 50,000 well-armed yeomanry and militia, and more than 300 pieces of cannon for the field. His rule was founded on the feelings of a people, but it involved the joint action of the necessary principles of military order and territorial extension; and when a limit had been set to Sikh dominion, and his own commanding genius was no more, the vital spirit of his race began to consume itself in domestic contentions.'

These domestic contentions gave a dangerous influence to the Khalsa or Sikh army, and made its chiefs the virtual rulers of the country. It was observed that at the same time a bitter feeling of hostility against the British began to prevail among these Punjabee warriors; until the aspect of affairs became so menacing that Lord Ellenborough deemed it advisable to assemble on the frontier a force of 27,000 men,

with sixty-six guns. When Sir Henry Hardinge succeeded to the Governor-Generalship he increased this force to 40,500 men, with ninety-four guns, believing that an invasion of British India was imminent. It was well that he did so. The Maharaja, Dhuleep Singh, was a mere boy, and during his minority the reins of power were held by his mother, who, as well as her ministers, saw that internal safety could be obtained only by engaging the army in some foreign enterprise. They did their utmost, therefore, to influence its hatred of the British, declaring that they meditated the annexation of the Punjab; and they appealed to its cupidity by promising it the plunder of Agra, Delhi, and Benares.

Confident in their valour, and believing in their military superiority, the Sikhs, some 60,000 strong, with 150 guns, suddenly broke across the Sutlej, and on the 14th of December, took up a position within a few miles of Ferozepur. There Sir John Littler was in command, with a garrison of 10,000 men. It was unquestionably a military blunder to allow the Sikhs to cross the river unopposed; nor were its effects entirely remedied by the rapidity with which the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, moved to the relief of Sir John Littler, accomplishing a forced march of 150 miles in six days, under the blazing sun of India.

Littler, on the advance of the Sikhs, had drawn out his troops, and offered battle; but the challenge was not accepted, either because the two chiefs, Lal Singh and Tij Singh, had been secretly bribed by us, or because they were afraid of their own soldiers. On the 18th two divisions of Sir Hugh Gough's army reached Moodkee, twenty miles from Ferozepur, and were suddenly attacked by a large body of Sikhs (10,000 cavalry and 4000 infantry, with twenty-two guns). Our men now for the first time learned what capable warriors these sons of the Punjab were. After a severe hand-to-hand struggle they were driven back; but the severity of the fight is proved by the extent of the British loss—215 killed and 657 wounded.

BATTLE OF FEROZESHUHUR

After a rest of ten days, the British army moved forward, accompanied by the Governor-General, to Ferozeshuhur, where Sir John Littler joined it on the 21st, with 5500 men and twenty-two guns. The Sikhs had pitched their camp in the form of a parallelogram, about 1800 yards in length by 900 yards in breadth, enclosing the village of Ferozeshuhur; the longer side, on the east, facing towards Ferozepur and the plain; the shorter sides, towards the Sutlej and Moodkee. They numbered 35,000 fighting men, with 100 guns and 250 camel swivels; heavy siege-guns armed their batteries. Heeding little their numerical superiority, Sir Hugh Gough resolved to attack them immediately; but, for some unexplained reason, a delay of three hours and a half took place, and the day was already waning before the order to advance was given. Sir Hugh, a man of splendid bravery but no proficient in the art of war, did not resort to any strategy. Ignorant of the warrior-phase in the Sikh character, he expected to win an easy victory by hurling his columns at the enemy's guns, and carrying them by the bayonet. He himself took command of the right wing; Sir John Littler of the left; while the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, with noble self-effacement, consented to lead the centre.

The left advanced against the western side of the enemy's position with intrepid steadiness, and in the face of a tremendous fire, charged to the very mouth of the guns. Then the deadliness of the incessant storm of shot averted their progress. Heroically the 62nd held their ground, until they had lost seven officers and seventy-six men, when they were compelled to retire. On the right and centre, the attack was not less vigorous, nor was the resistance less determined. The Sikh batteries were very powerful, and their gunners worked them with great energy and skill.

'Guns were dismounted, and the ammunition was blown in the air; squadrons were checked in mid-career; battalion after battalion was hurled back with shattered ranks, and it was not until after sunset that portions of the enemy's position were finally carried. Darkness and the obstinacy of the contest threw the English into confusion; men of all regiments and arms were mixed together; generals were ignorant of the fact or of the extent of their own success, and colonels knew not what had become of the regiments they commanded, or of the army of which they formed a part. Some portions of the enemy's line had not been broken, and the uncaptured guns were turned by the Sikhs upon masses of soldiers, oppressed with cold and thirst and fatigue, and who attracted the attention of the watchful enemy by lighting fires of brushwood to warm their stiffened limbs. The position of the English was one of real danger and great perplexity; their mercenaries had proved themselves good soldiers in foreign countries as well as in India itself, where discipline was little known, or while success was continuous; but in a few hours the 5000 children of a distant land found that their art had been learnt, and that an emergency had arisen which would try their energies to the utmost. On that memorable night the English were hardly masters of the ground on which they stood; they had no reserve at hand, while the enemy had fallen back upon a second army, and could renew the fight with increased numbers.'

A division, under Sir Harry Smith, had actually forced its way into the heart of the Sikh position, and, after a tremendous carnage, had occupied the village of Feroze-shuhur; but it was unsupported, and the artillery fire poured upon it was so destructive that, in the depth of the night, it was reluctantly compelled to fall back a couple of miles. Another division, General Gilbert's, which was animated by the presence of the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor-General, was more successful. It captured

the batteries in its front, though a hurricane of musketry then stayed its further advance, and it bivouacked for the night on the border of the Sikh camp.

'The night of the 21st of December,' wrote Lord Hardinge afterwards, 'was the most extraordinary of my life. I bivouacked with the men without food or covering, and our nights are bitter cold. A burning camp in our front, our brave fellows lying down under a heavy cannonade, which continued during the whole night, mixed with the wild cries of the Sikhs, our English hurrah, the tramp of men, and the groans of the dying. In this state, with a handful of men who had carried the batteries the night before, I remained till morning, taking my short intervals of rest by lying down with various regiments in succession, to ascertain their temper and revive their spirits. . . . My answer to all and every man was, that we must fight it out, attack the enemy vigorously at daybreak, beat him, or die honourably on the field.'

Sir Hugh Gough has put on record an example of the Governor-General's chivalrous activity. 'Near the middle of the battle,' he says, 'one of the enemy's heavy guns was advanced, and played with deadly effect upon our troops. Sir Henry Hardinge immediately formed Her Majesty's 80th foot, and the 1st European Light Infantry. They were led to the attack by their commanding officers, and animated in their exertions by Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, who was wounded in the outset. The 80th captured the gun, and the enemy, dismayed by this counter-check, did not venture to press on further. During the whole night, however, they continued to harass our troops by fire of artillery, whenever moonlight discovered our position.'

There was not wanting earnest advice—and this, too from experienced officers, who stood aghast at our heavy losses—that we should retire to Ferozepur. But the Governor-General would not hear of such a retrograde movement, the effect of which would have been to have

inflamed the martial ardour of the Sikhs to madness, and have roused to action every discontented spirit in the empire. It so happened that, in the camp of the enemy, affairs had gone far from smoothly. Lal Singh's military chest had been plundered; the leaders were consumed by jealousies and rivalries; while both Lal Singh and Tij Singh desired in their hearts the destruction of an army which refused to be controlled. At daybreak the scattered battalions of the British were re-organised, and led once more against the Sikh entrenchments, Sir Hugh Gough commanding on the right, and Sir Henry Hardinge on the left. They advanced with a dogged resolution which defied all opposition; drove the enemy out of their lines and cleared the village of Ferozeshuhur; then, changing front to the left, swept along the entire position with the ruthlessness of a simoom. Well satisfied with the success they had achieved, they halted in good order, as if on a field day at home, and received their two gallant leaders with a loud and long British cheer, waving the captured standards of the Khalsa army.

The echoes of that shout of victory still floated over the contested field, when the bayonets of a new enemy were seen advancing through rolling clouds of dust. Each weary warrior asked himself and his comrade, what is now to be done? The answer was invariably the same. Since victory against such odds is impossible, we will die as English soldiers know how to die! The army so rapidly approaching proved to be Tij Singh's division, consisting of 20,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry, with seventy guns. But finding the Sikh camp at Ferozeshuhur in the possession of the British, and Lal Singh's beaten forces in full retreat towards the Sutlej—ignorant that the victors were spent with battle and faint with hunger, that their guns were mostly dismounted and their ammunition exhausted—they contented themselves with a distant cannonade, and shortly retreated. Probably never before or since—not even in the worst throes of the Sepoy mutiny—has the existence of our Indian

empire been on so slight a thread. Had Tij Singh thrown his fresh and powerful division upon our exhausted soldiery, not even British courage and tenacity could have saved them from defeat, perhaps destruction.

The terrible losses of the British testify to the desperate character of the contest in which they had been engaged :— 694 killed and 1721 wounded, or 2415 in all, amounting to about one-seventh of the whole British force engaged. The Sikhs had 2000 killed and from 5000 to 6000 wounded. Seventy-three guns were captured. The doubtful issue of the battle, and the extreme bloodiness, are attributable to two causes : the courage and discipline of the Sikhs, who are superior in fighting qualities to any other native race, except, perhaps, the Ghoorkhas ; and the ineffective generalship of the British commander, who without any attempt at manœuvres, threw his men upon rows of bristling batteries, exposing them to certain slaughter, and allowing the Sikhs to make free use of their splendid artillery which surpassed that of the British in number and power.

On the public mind a very painful impression was not unnaturally produced by the action at Ferozeshuhur. It was true that some cannon had been captured, and the Sikhs had undeniably been driven out of their camp ; yet in its consequences such a victory was scarcely less disastrous than a defeat. The conquerors had lost one-seventh of their numerical strength, and had been unable to pursue the Khalsa army in its slow withdrawal across the Sutlej. That the military prestige and imperial authority of England must immediately be vindicated, everybody agreed. A large supply of military stores, a train of heavy guns, and reinforcements were ordered up from Delhi, and to await their arrival Sir Hugh Gough distributed his forces along a line extending from Ferozepur towards Hurreekkee, or parallel to that occupied by the Sikhs. The inaction of the British was misunderstood by the enemy, whom it so emboldened that, towards the end of

January, 1846, Rānjur Singh crossed the Sutlej with a strong division, and advanced against Loodiana. Sir Harry Smith, with four regiments of infantry, three of cavalry, and eighteen guns, was immediately despatched for the defence of that important station. He marched on the 17th, but on the 21st received information that, the day before, Runjur Singh, with 10,000 men, had moved to Buddaval. Here a brisk skirmish took place, but it had no decisive effect, and Sir Harry continued his march to Loodiana.

He was soon afterwards reinforced by a brigade of infantry, and ordered to prevent the enemy from attacking the large and valuable convoy which was hastening up from Delhi. Runjur Singh had also received reinforcements, and mustered 15,000 men against Sir Harry Smith's 11,000 men, when, on the 28th of January, the two armies came into collision at Aliwal, a village on the Sutlej. A decisive victory rewarded the gallantry with which Sir Harry's regiments stormed the Sikh position, and carried the village of Aliwal at the point of the bayonet, a brilliant charge of cavalry consummating the success. The Sikhs fled in disorder across the Sutlej, abandoning their camp and baggage, their grain and ammunition, and fifty-two guns.

This reverse induced the Sikh leaders to open secret negotiations with the Anglo-Indian Government, which intimated its readiness to grant favourable conditions if the Khalsa army were disbanded. Gholab Singh, Rajah of Sammoo, who took the principal part in these communications, replied that he was wholly unable to control the army, which, in truth, was the supreme power in the state. Eventually, an agreement (it is said), was arrived at by which the Sikh leaders betrayed their own soldiers. The Khalsa army was to be attacked by the British, and when defeated, abandoned by its own Government; and the road to Lahore was to be thrown open to the victors.

At this time the Khalsa army, 35,000 strong, was con-

centrated in a formidably entrenched camp upon the Sutlej, near the village or villages of Subraon. The river formed the basis of a series of semi-circular lines, the outermost of which was covered by a deep ditch, and armed with sixty-seven heavy guns. A bridge of boats connected the camp with a fortified port on the opposite bank of the river. Tij Singh commanded in these entrenchments; Lal Singh, at the head of the cavalry, lay higher up the Sutlej. The Sikh soldiery were full of exultation and defiance; and still further to excite their ardour, a veteran chief, Sham Singh, of Alaue, resolved on a formal act of self-devotion in the course of the coming battle, in order to propitiate the invisible Powers which watched over the fortunes of the children of Govind.

BATTLE OF SUBRAON, *February 10, 1846*

For seven long weeks the British soldiers and their Sepoy comrades watched the encampment of the enemy increasing in extent and strength; and it was with unrestrained delight that they hailed the arrival of their own long-expected train of huge and heavy ordnance, with ample supplies of ammunition. Every man was determined that, as far as in him lay, the next contention with the Sikhs should end in a decisive victory. The attack was fixed for the 10th of February, and the generals drew up their force in three divisions, mustering in all about 5000 British, and 10,000 native soldiers. The left wing was placed under General Dick, the centre under General Gilbert, and the right wing under Sir Harry Smith. The generals, on a careful survey of the Sikh position, came to the conclusion that, by carrying it at either end, it would be possible to take the batteries of the centre line in reverse, so that their fire would be practically nullified. As the right flank was apparently the weaker, General Dick, whose division was the strongest, received orders to deliver there a serious assault, while the attention

of the enemy was distracted and his resources divided by feigned attacks on the left and centre. The whole of the heavy artillery sent up from Delhi was collected in masses, opposite particular points, so that at each of them might be directed a tremendous and an overpowering storm of shot and shell. These preparations occupied the 9th of February. Early on the following morning, under cover of a dense fog, the British lines advanced, and, unseen by the enemy, pushed forward until within striking distance. Then the sun arose—the fog vanished swiftly—and the two armies stood revealed to each other in all the grim array of battle. The British cannon opened fire, eliciting a fierce reply from the guns of the Sikhs. The cannonade continued for two hours, when Sir Hugh Gough discovering that he could not silence the enemy's powerful ordnance, resolved on charging with the bayonet.

In even order and with a brisk step the left wing of the British army moved to the attack; but the regiments had unhappily been formed in line instead of in column, and their losses were much heavier, therefore, than they need have been. 'Every shot from the enemy's lines told upon the expanse of men, and the greater part of the division was driven back by the deadly fire of muskets and swivels and enfilading artillery. On the extreme left, the regiments effected an entrance amid the advanced banks and trenches of petty outworks, where possession could be of little avail; but their comrades on the right were animated by the partial success; they chafed under the disgrace of repulse, and forming themselves instinctively into wedges and masses, and headed by an old and fearless leader, Sir Robert Dick (who fell mortally wounded, close to the trenches), they rushed forward in wrath.' With a mighty martial shout they crossed the ditch, scaled the rampart, and bayoneted the gunners at their guns. A bitter resistance was still offered; but the centre came up, and with levelled steel drove the Sikhs from the ground.

Along the right and centre of the hostile lines, the batteries were all carried ; and the assault being renewed on the left, with both infantry and cavalry, it ultimately proved successful. Within the camp, however, the Khalsa warriors still contended desperately, their military ardour influenced by religious enthusiasm. Tij Singh, it is true, filled up the measure of his treachery to his countrymen by a precipitate flight ; while, either by accident or design, a boat in the middle of the bridge that spanned the Sutlej was sunk or sank. The venerable Sham Singh perceived that, if the battle were to be won by the fulfilment of his vow, the hour had come. Clad in the white robes of martyrdom, and solemnly exhorting his fellow warriors to fight for their faith, he inspired the defence with indescribable zeal, until a bullet laid him dead upon the field. For full thirty minutes this new phase of the battle lasted. Amid the sharp continuous rattle of the musketry and the intermittent thunder-peals of the cannon arose the shout of triumph and the yell of defiance ; until, at times, all lesser sounds were silenced by the explosions of magazines of gunpowder, which hurled bursting shells and masses of earth and flaming brands high up into the smoke-clouds that over-canopied the field of battle. Gradually the stern tenacious courage of the British soldier prevailed. The foe was driven back upon the rolling waters of the Sutlej, never offering to submit, never asking for quarter. 'The victors looked with stolid wonderment upon the indomitable courage of the vanquished, and forebore to strike where the helpless and the dying frowned unavailing hatred. But the necessities of war pressed upon the commanders, and *they* had effectually to disperse that army which had so long scorned their power. The fire of batteries and battalions precipitated the flight of the Sikhs through the waters of the Sutlej, and the triumph of the English became full and manifest. The troops, defiled with dust, and smoke, and carnage, then stood mute indeed for a

moment, until the glory of their success rushing upon their minds, they gave expression to their feelings, and hailed their victorious commanders with reiterated shouts of triumph and congratulation.'

The loss of the Sikhs in this great battle has been variously estimated at 8000, 9000, and 10,000 men, besides 67 guns, upwards of 200 camel-swivels, numerous standards, and large supplies of munitions of war. On the side of the British, 320 were killed, and 2083 wounded. The defeat and discouragement of the Khalsa army was complete. The British forces and camp-followers, an aggregate of 100,000 men, together with 68,000 animals and forty pieces of artillery crossed the Sutlej unopposed, entered the Punjab, and on the 12th took possession of the town and fortress of Kusoor. On the 20th they encamped on the plain in front of Lahore, and a British garrison was thrown into the citadel. The terms of peace then imposed by the Governor-General included the cession to the British of the district between the rivers Sutlej and Beas; and also, as the Lahore treasury was empty and could not pay the required indemnity, of the province of Kashmir and the highlands of Summoo. Kashmir was immediately made over to Gholab Singh on payment of a crore of rupees, he agreeing to acknowledge the suzerainty of the British. The Khalsa army was disbanded, and a small Sikh army of 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry raised to keep the peace. Further a British resident (Major Henry Lawrence) was appointed to advise and control the Maharaja and the council of regency; he was to exercise 'unlimited authority in all matters of internal administration and external relations during the minority of the Maharaja.'

In 1848 Lord Hardinge returned to England. He was succeeded in the Governor-Generalship by Lord Dalhousie. At that time the empire seemed to be enjoying the *pax Romana*; but in the affairs of States as of individuals it is always the unexpected that happens. Like a bolt from the

sky came the intelligence of a sudden outbreak at Mooltan, —a fortified city, the capital of a large district between the Indus and the Sutlej,—and of the murder of Mr Vans Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson, the representatives of the British Government. Such an outrage called for immediate punishment; but Lord Gough was averse to moving the troops until the cold season, and the consequent delay gave time to the leaders of the insurrection to rekindle the fanaticism of the Sikhs and plunge them into armed strife with the British. Through the promptitude, energy, and ability of Lieutenant (afterwards Sir Herbert) Edwards, who was then engaged on a special service across the Indus, and had with him a small force of infantry and cavalry, the movement was kept within moderate limits for a time. In August, General Whish, with 7000 men, was despatched to re-capture Mooltan, but he was deserted by Shere Singh, and his Sikhs, and compelled to entrench himself near the river, until he could receive reinforcements. This failure had an unfortunate effect. It fanned the fires of rebellion until their flames spread from end to end of the Punjab, and Lord Dalhousie awoke to the fact that he had to deal with a nation of warriors, bent on expelling the British from the territory of the Five Rivers. All the energy and vigour of his hard Scotch intellect were immediately brought into play. Supplies were rapidly sent forward, and reinforcements hurried up to the frontier; so that in a few weeks a large and well-appointed army was concentrated at Ferozepur. When Lord Gough arrived to take the command, in the month of October, he found himself at the head of four British and eleven native regiments of infantry, and of three British and five native regiments of cavalry, with seventy-eight guns. Completing his arrangements with all possible expedition, he was able to make a forward movement on the 16th of November, when he crossed the Ravee and advanced towards the Chenab. At Ramnugger he found Shere Singh posted on both banks of

the river, with 15,000 fanatical warriors. The main body occupied the right bank, where it was skilfully covered by batteries armed with twenty-eight guns. At this point there was a convenient ford, but Shere Singh had thrown a strong detachment across the river to hold it. Without waiting for his artillery to come up, and ignoring the formidable character of their position, Lord Gough, with all his old impetuosity, dashed at the Sikhs on the left bank, intending to drive them headlong across the river (November 22nd). His light field-pieces, of which he had twelve, compelled the enemy to fall back; but the Sikh batteries on the right bank, as soon as they got the range, assailed the British artillery with such volleys of shot and shell that, in its turn, it retreated.

The logic of circumstances convinced Lord Gough that the Sikh position could not be stormed with the bayonet; and he resolved, therefore, to pass a strong division across the river some distance above it, which should operate against its left flank, while the attention of its defenders was occupied by a brisk cannonade in front. A body of 8000 infantry and cavalry, with thirty field-pieces and two heavy guns, was placed under the command of an able and experienced officer, Sir Joseph Thackwell. He began his march during the night of the 1st of December, and pushing forward to Wuzeerabad, twenty-four miles, he crossed the Chenab at noon on the 2nd. Having rested and refreshed his men, he marched down the river about half-way towards the hostile camp. Orders to attack it on the left, while the main body crossed and delivered an assault in front, reached him at midnight, and calling his weary soldiers again to arms, he advanced another six miles with cheerful perseverance. Then came fresh instructions from the Commander-in-Chief. A sufficient number of boats for the passage of the army could not be found; but he (Thackwell) would be reinforced by General Godly's brigade, which would cross the river six miles up. He immediately

secured the ford by which Godly would have to cross, and then proceeded to serve out rations to his soldiers, who had fared indifferently since they quitted the British camp. About two o'clock in the afternoon, while they were thus engaged, the sound of cannon was heard; and Sir Joseph's outposts came in with the news that Shere Singh had marched down from Ramnugger to attack him. Rapidly getting his division into battle-order, he made the best preparations possible to receive the enemy, and, as they advanced, greeted them with a heavy artillery fire; but the feebleness of his force compelled him to act upon the defensive. At nightfall the guns on both sides sank into silence; and, covered by the darkness, Shere Singh hastily broke up his camps, removed his army to the Jhelum, and there, with equal skill and swiftness, entrenched himself very strongly.

BATTLE OF CHILLIANWALLAH, *January 14, 1849*

A delay of several weeks ensued, the blame of which must be equally shared, it seems, by the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief. During this period of inaction the strength of the enemy was gradually increasing; and Lord Gough became convinced at last of the necessity of striking a decisive blow. On the 12th of January, 1849, he left his encampment at Janikee, and advanced as far as Dingee. Next day he pushed forward with the view of turning the enemy's left at Russool, but the formidable character of the position and its natural difficulties induced him to hesitate. Moreover, experience had shown that in the defence the Sikhs almost equalled his own troops in high military qualities. On the 14th he advanced to Chillianwallah, and there discovered that Shere Singh had descended from his camp on the Russool heights, and massed his troops in the plain, with his front protected by a dense jungle and much broken ground.

Lord Gough perceived that in the circumstances it would be imprudent to attack before the position had been accurately reconnoitred, and he issued orders for his troops to pitch their tents; but a volley from some of the Sikh guns seemed an insult to the flag, and aroused his old impetuous temper. It was late in the day—in fact, within only two hours of nightfall—but he prepared for immediate battle.

The British artillery at once opened fire; but the Sikh lines were sheltered by thick jungle, and suffered very slightly. The attack was commenced by General Sir Colin Campbell's division, which consisted of two brigades, under Brigadiers Hoggan and Pennycuick, on the left. They moved forward with true British steadiness, and though their ranks were torn by the tremendous fire which greeted them, Brigadier Hoggan's warriors succeeded in driving back the dusky battalions opposed to them. Their comrades, under Brigadier Pennycuick, were less successful. The 24th sprang forward with an elastic step, as if on parade, but, over-mastered by their ardour, they broke into double-quick march, and, before the native regiments could close up, went headlong at the Sikh guns. But the defence was too strong for them. Largely outnumbered, and with men falling dead and wounded at every step, they retreated in disorder, and, in spite of the most strenuous efforts of the officers, the disorder spread to the native troops. Brigadier Pennycuick and Colonel Roberts were killed in the fierce affray. The Sikhs made a tremendous assault on the discouraged and disorganised mass, using their tulwars with fatal effect; they carried off the colours of the 24th, which had lost twenty-three officers and 459 men killed and wounded. Lord Gough sent the reserve, under General Penny, to restore the battle, but it lost its way in the thick coverts of the jungle; and it was left to General Campbell to retrieve the honour of the British arms by leading Brigadier Hoggan's victorious regiments against the exultant enemy. The Sikhs were met at the point of the bayonet

forced back into their own lines, and their guns were taken.

On the right the burden of the battle was borne by General Sir Walter Gilbert's division. Brigadier Mountain's brigade carried the enemy's position and captured several guns, though not without heavy loss. Brigadier Godly's also succeeded in occupying the enemy's ground, but becoming involved in the jungle, it was decimated by a flank fire, and saved only by the admirable conduct of the field battery under Major Dawes.

The part played by our cavalry in this desperate action must next be described. As it had been employed by Lord Gough to protect the flanks of his infantry and extend its meagre line, it was greatly harassed by the tremendous fire of the Sikh artillery. 'On the right flank,' says Marshman, 'in prolongation of the infantry, were the 14th Dragoons, the 9th Lancers, and two native cavalry regiments. The troops of artillery attached to the brigade were planted in the rear, and could not therefore open fire from a single gun. This strong cavalry brigade was entrusted to Brigadier Pope, who had been an active officer in his youth, but was now unable to mount his horse without assistance. He was, moreover, of a fanciful and irritable temper, and obstinately wedded to his old-fashioned notions of cavalry manoeuvre. He advanced his four regiments forward in a single line, and though the forest was dense, not a skirmisher was sent forward to explore the way, and no reserve or supporting column was provided against temporary reverse. As the line advanced, first at a walk and then at a trot, it was broken up by trees and clumps of brushwood into numerous series of small sections, doubled behind each other. In this state of things a small body of Sikh horse, intoxicated with drugs, rushed in a mass upon the centre, wounded the brigadier, and caused a sensation of terror among the native cavalry which it was found impossible to counteract.' Just at this crisis, some one in the ranks of

the 14th Dragoons, whose name has never been ascertained, uttered the words, 'Threes about.' The regiment at once turned to the rear and moved off in confusion, and, as the Sikh horse pressed on its track, galloped headlong in disgraceful panic through the cannon and waggons posted in its rear, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of its commander, Colonel King, and of the chaplain of the forces, the Rev. Mr Whiting, to rally the fugitives. The Sikh horse entered the ranks of the artillery along with the flying dragoons, and captured four guns; the disgrace of the brigade was irreparable. On the left, however, Sir Joseph Thackwell's troopers vindicated their old renown; and riding down the Sikhs with relentless fury, cut their way to the rear of their position.

Night came on, and the fighting ceased. The British army, shattered as it was, occupied the ground which the enemy had covered in the morning, but Lord Gough judged it prudent to retire to Chillianwallah, that his troops might obtain fresh water and a little repose. Under the shelter of the darkness, bands of Sikhs prowled about the battle-field, murdering the wounded, and stripping and mutilating the slain; they also carried off the guns captured by the British, with the exception of twelve, which had previously been brought into camp.

Though Chillianwallah cannot be called a victory—was, at the most, only a drawn battle—yet it is not one of the least memorable or least honourable actions in which the British army have been engaged. Our soldiers, badly led, deprived of a fair opportunity of meeting their foes on something like equal terms, thrown against a formidably strong position, and a numerous artillery, fought with wonderful steadiness and with a fortitude that took no account of odds; and their heavy losses bore witness to their unconquerable martial spirit. Their killed and wounded were reckoned at no fewer than 89 officers and 2269 rank and file. It is probable that the loss of the Sikhs was

almost double. The Sikhs captured three regimental colours and four guns of the horse artillery; they themselves lost twelve guns.

When the news of this bloody and indecisive field reached England, the impression of alarm and anxiety which it produced was wide-spread and deep. A proud imperial race had been ill-fitted by a long series of brilliant victories to hear with composure of British guns and colours being taken,—of British cavalry flying before an Asiatic host,—of a British army barely able to save itself from defeat by a semi-civilised people. There could be no doubt that our prestige and power in India had been dangerously shaken; and the disaster was attributed, not altogether without justice, to the errors of the Commander-in-Chief. With the concurrence of the Government, the Directors of the East India House resolved on the extreme step of recalling Lord Gough, and despatching Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, to take the direction of the war. At first he would have excused himself on the ground of ill health, but the Duke of Wellington said, 'if you do not go, I must;' and Sir Charles then withdrew his objections. In three days he left England, and within a few weeks of his appointment was at Calcutta. But with all this rapidity of action he was anticipated by events; and while he was still on his voyage, Guzerat was won, Mooltan taken, and the Punjab annexed.

BATTLE OF GUZERAT, *February 21, 1849*

Before venturing upon another engagement with his courageous enemy, Lord Gough was compelled to wait until General Whish had reduced Mooltan, and could bring up his division to his reinforcement.

It is necessary to remind the reader that, after Shere Singh's treacherous defection (in September 1848), General Whish retired to a secure position at Suruj-Khund, his force

being inadequate to the siege of so strong a place as Mooltan. Three months elapsed before some regiments were sent from Bombay to his assistance, and in the interval, the Sikhs collected a large stock of provisions, and repaired and extended the fortifications of the town and citadel. The Bombay corps, 9000 strong, arrived at Rom on the Indus about the 18th of December ; and a week later, reached Suruj-Khund, increasing General Whish's strength to 17,000 fighting men, with sixty-four guns. On the 27th, he re-invested Mooltan, and day after day bombarded it with great determination. A sortie made by a couple of thousand of the Sikh garrison was gallantly driven back by Herbert Edwardes' levies, under the eye of Sir Henry Lawrence. When the British artillery had cleared the suburbs, it opened on the walls of the town, and for five days and nights hurled at them a storm of shot and shell. On the third day, a mosque, which the enemy had converted into a magazine, and filled with 400,000 lbs. of gunpowder, was set on fire; the magazine exploded, and wrought tremendous havoc over a wide area. On New Year's Day, a practicable breach was effected, and next day it was stormed, and the town carried with heavy slaughter. With equal energy was pushed forward the siege of the citadel, and on the 3rd, Masbruj opened up communications with General Whish. But when he found that the English commander would hear of nothing but an 'unconditional surrender,' he renewed his defence; and for another fortnight the citadel was exposed to an artillery fire of the most formidable nature. On the 22nd, Masbruj yielded, and General Whish, placing Herbert Edwardes, with a sufficient garrison, in charge of the captured city, broke up his camp, and proceeded by quick marches to reinforce Lord Gough.

A very considerable change had by this time taken place in the situation of the army at Chillianwallah. It had long kept watch and ward over the Sikhs as they lay encamped on the heights at Russool; but on the 6th of February

it was ascertained that Shere Singh, with the tactical skill he had always exhibited, had moved from Russool, turned the British right, and was advancing upon Lahore. Lord Gough immediately sent forward General Gilbert to reconnoitre the Sikh camp at Russool; he found it deserted and silent. Either from want of supplies, or to satisfy the impatient ardour of his fighting-men, Shere Singh had marched upon Guzerat, and thrown a portion of his army across the Chenab at Wuzeerabad. Had he pushed forward rapidly, he might have crushed General Whish's brigades in succession, and decided the campaign against the British. But he seems to have recoiled from his own audacity, and, by recalling the detachment he had sent across the Chenab, gave time for General Whish to seize and guard all the fords. Thereupon he concentrated his troops at Guzerat, which was associated by the Sikhs with some auspicious events, and prepared to encounter the shock of British battle.

General Whish's division completed its junction with Lord Gough on the 20th of February, and the Commander-in-Chief, at the head of 20,000 men, with a hundred guns, immediately advanced. From a reconnaissance made by General Cheape, a competent and experienced engineering officer, it was known that Shere Singh's army numbered 50,000 men, with sixty guns, and was posted, in the form of a crescent, in front of the walled town of Guzerat. On the right it was protected by the deep dug bed of the Dwara, which winds round two sides of the town, diverging to a considerable distance on the north and west, and then striking southward across the British position. A deep, narrow, and wet nullah, running from the east of the town, and falling into the Chenab, covered its left. Between this and the Dwara extended an area of about three miles; and near Guzerat lay two small villages, which Shere Singh had fortified and garrisoned with matchlock men. The Khalsa regiments were entrenched in the open

space, their front covered with batteries, and their disposal so skilfully made that of every inequality of ground full advantage had been taken.

The order in which the British forces were drawn up Lord Gough thus describes in his dispatch :—

‘On the extreme left I placed the Bombay column, commanded by the Honourable H. Dundas, supported by Brigadier White’s brigade of cavalry, and the Scinde horse, under Sir J. Thackwell, to protect the left, and to prevent large bodies of Sikh and Afghan cavalry from turning that flank; with this cavalry I placed Captain Duncan’s and Whish’s troops of horse artillery, whilst the infantry was covered by the Bombay troop of horse artillery, under Major Bond.

‘On the right of the Bombay column, and with the right resting on the nullah, I placed Brigadier-General Campbell’s division of infantry, covered by No. 5 and No. 10 light field batteries, under Major Ludlow and Lieutenant Robertson, having Brigadier Hoggan’s brigade of infantry in reserve.

‘Upon the right of the nullah I placed the infantry division of Major-General Sir Walter Gilbert, the heavy guns, eighteen in number, under Majors Day and Horsford, with Captain Shakespear and Brevet-major Sir R. Shakespear; commanding batteries being disposed in two divisions upon the flanks of his left brigade.

‘The line was prolonged by Major-General Whish’s division of infantry, with one brigade of infantry, under Brigadier Markham, in support, in second line; and the whole covered by three troops of horse artillery and a light field battery, with two troops of horse artillery, in a second line, in reserve, under Lieutenant-Colonel Brind.

‘My right flank was protected by Brigadiers Hearsay and Lockwood’s brigades of cavalry, with Captain Warren’s troop of horse artillery.

‘The 5th and 6th Light Cavalry, with the Bombay

Light Field Battery, and the 45th and 69th regiments, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Mercer, most effectually protected my rear and baggage.

‘With my right wing, I proposed penetrating the centre of the enemy’s line, so as to turn the position of their force in rear of the nullah, and thus enable my left wing to cross it with little loss; and, in co-operation with my right, to double upon the centre the wings of the enemy’s force opposed to them. . . .

‘At half-past seven o’clock,’ says Lord Gough, ‘the army advanced in the order described, with the precision of a parade movement. The enemy opened their fire at a very long distance, which exposed to my artillery both the position and range of their guns. I halted the infantry just out of fire, and advanced the whole of my artillery, covered by skirmishers.

‘The cannonade now opened upon the enemy was the most magnificent I ever witnessed, and as terrible in its effects.’

In the Sikh camp was at this time, and for some time previously had been, a prisoner, Major George Lawrence. The Sikh chiefs treated him with courteous attention. In conversation with him, they had frequently commented on the great error of the British Commander-in-Chief in neglecting to utilise his formidable artillery, and pushing forward his infantry, unsupported, to the very mouths of the hostile guns. Being allowed to visit on parole his brother, Sir Henry Lawrence, at Lahore, he repeated this shrewd criticism, which Sir Henry thought worthy of transmission to Lord Dalhousie in his camp on the Sutlej. We are told that the Governor-General brought it to Lord Gough’s notice. However this may be, it is well known that a similar opinion had been expressed with much warmth by Brigadier-General Tennant and other distinguished artillery officers. That Lord Gough acted upon it at Guzerat is certain; and the

victory he won was in great measure due to the tremendous cannonade which, for three hours, was directed at the Sikh position. The enemy's gunners could reply but feebly and ineffectively to an artillery which both in number and calibre surpassed anything ever before brought into the field in India. They were compelled to fall back; the British guns then pushed ahead, took up a new line, and resumed their fire. At length, when many of the Sikh pieces were dismounted, and the enemy's firing had almost ceased, Lord Gough deployed his infantry, which moved forward with characteristic British phlegm, supported by the field batteries.

Right in the way of Sir Walter Gilbert's advance lay the larger of the Habea villages, in which was posted a larger body of the enemy, flanked by a couple of batteries. It was carried in splendid style by Brigadier Penny's brigade, his men forcing an entrance into the loopholed huts, and bayoneting the Sikh soldiers where they stood. Almost at the same time the smaller Habea was cleared by the gallant 10th, in spite of a fierce and tenacious resistance. The heavy artillery continued their forward movement, successively taking up positions nearer the enemy; and their incessant volleys, combined with the swift and telling fire of the horse artillery and light field batteries, overwhelmed the hostile ranks at all points. The British fighting-men, with exultant shouts, and levelled steel, dashed ahead; cleared the nullah; swept the enemy out of several villages, and took possession of his camp. After which, the right wing swept onward in pursuit to the eastward, while the left wing diverged to the westward, killing and wounding, with relentless severity.

The retreat of the Sikh army, thus hotly pressed, soon became a perfect flight; all arms dispersing over the country, rapidly pursued by our troops for a distance of twelve miles, their track strewn with their wounded,

their arms, and military equipments, which they threw away to conceal that they were soldiers.'

The pursuit was duly taken up by the cavalry, who plunged in among the scattered battalions with the fury of battle kindling in their blood, and never drew rein or paused for breath until half-past four, when their 'ride of death' had carried them fifteen miles beyond Guzerat. Next morning, the chase was continued under the direction of Sir Walter Gilbert, *le plus beau sabreur* of the Indian army; while Sir Colin Campbell's division marched in the direction of Bosubu, and a body of horsemen, under Colonel Bradford, pushed on several miles into the hills. The Khalsa army was completely broken up, and the Sikhs found themselves compelled to submit unconditionally. They gave up all their prisoners on the 5th of March, and on the 12th laid their swords at Sir Walter Gilbert's feet. Forty-one pieces of cannon were at the same time given up; making, with those captured in battle, one hundred and sixty in all, which had fallen into British hands.

Lord Dalhousie, in the proclamation which announced those great successes, remarked, that the war was not yet concluded, nor could there be any cessation of hostilities until Dost Mohamed Khan and the Afghan army were either driven from the province of Peshawar or destroyed within it. The chastisement of these Afghan auxiliaries was entrusted to the indefatigable Gilbert, for whom, as truly as for any moss-trooper or border-rider of the days of old, the saddle was his home. On the evening of the day which had witnessed the disarming of Shere Singh's army, he mounted and rode away towards Attock, in order to overtake the Afghans before they could cross the Indus. But they had already passed the river; and Gilbert, accompanied by his staff and only a small escort, galloping forward to an eminence, could see them labouring strenuously at the destruction of the bridge of boats by which they had effected the transit. His artillery coming up, he soon

put them to flight, and fifteen of the best of the boats that had formed the bridge were saved. With these the British troops began to cross the Indus. Negotiations meanwhile were opened up with some of the mountain tribes to obstruct the retreat of the Afghans through the Khyber Pass. But the river was rapidly rising, delaying the passage of the cavalry and infantry; while the Afghans, having abandoned their baggage, continued their flight with a rapidity that outstripped their pursuers, and succeeded in reaching Dekka, on the west side of the Khyber.

The war was ended, and the victors were at liberty to dispose of their conquest. As a matter of course, the Punjab was annexed to our Indian empire, and this annexation was formally announced by Lord Dalhousie in a proclamation, dated March 30, 1849, in which he said :—

‘For many years in the time of the Maharaja Runjeet Singh, peace and friendship prevailed between the British nation and the Sikhs. When Runjeet Singh was dead, and his wisdom no longer guided the counsels of the state, the Sirdars and the Khalsa army, without provocation and without cause, suddenly invaded the British territories. Their army was again and again defeated. They were driven with slaughter and in shame from the country they had invaded, and at the gates of Lahore the Maharaja Dhuleep Singh tendered to the Governor-General the submission of himself and his chief, and solicited the clemency of the British government. The Governor-General extended the clemency of his government to the state of Lahore; he generously spared the kingdom which he had acquired a just right to subvert; and, the Maharaja having been replaced on the throne, treaties of friendship were formed between the states.’

After a rapid summary of the iniquities of the Sikhs, Lord Dalhousie continued :—

‘Finally, the army of the state and the whole Sikh

people, joined by many of the sirdars in the Punjab, who signed the treaties, and led by a member of the Regency itself, have risen in arms against us, and have waged a fierce and bloody war for the proclaimed purpose of destroying the British and their power. The Government of India formally declared that it desired no further conquest, and it proved by its acts the sincerity of its professions. The Government of India has no desire for conquest now ; but it is bound, in its duty, to provide fully for its own security, and to guard the interests of those committed to its charge. To that end, and as the only sure mode of protecting the state from the perpetual recurrence of unprovoked and wasting wars, the Governor-General is compelled to resolve upon the entire subjection of a people whom their own government has long been unable to control, and whom (as events have now shown) no punishment can deter from violence, no acts of friendship can conciliate to peace. Wherefore, the Governor-General of India has declared, and hereby proclaims, that the Kingdom of the Punjab is at an end, and that all the territories of Maharaja Dhuleep Singh are now and henceforth a portion of the British Empire in India.'

CHAPTER III

THE CRIMEAN WAR

THE war with Russia, which broke out in 1854, lies still too much within the province of modern history to be made the subject of cool and impartial discussion. At all events, in these pages, we are not called upon to discuss the method of its inception, or to decide whether, with greater firmness on the part of our rulers, it might or might not have been avoided; whether it was or was not precipitated by Louis Napoleon to serve a selfish dynastic purpose; whether, in any degree, it sprang from a misunderstanding on the part of Russia as to the views and motives of the English Government. For ourselves, we shall be content to say that what, on the whole, appears to us a dispassionate judgment of it, and a tolerably adequate exposition of its causes, will be found in Sir Theodore Martin's 'Life of the Prince Consort,' in the Prince Consort's own words. And we must give it as our impression that the majority of Englishmen still think, as the Prince Consort thought, that it was a just and necessary war. It is frequently asserted that its results were inconsiderable; but this is not a fair statement of the case. It certainly accomplished all, or

nearly all, that was desired by those who waged it. The advance of Russia was checked for a quarter of a century; and Turkey was granted a further interval of peace in which to carry out the reforms urged upon her by the Western Powers. That she did not so utilise the interval was due to a mistaken feeling, for which she has since severely suffered. As far as England was concerned, the war indicated the very grave defects existing in our military organisation; and the work of reparation and restoration then initiated has continued to the present time with the happiest consequences. There have been many wars of which less could be said in vindication. And we may add that, though it produced no great military commander, it fully maintained the reputation which the British soldier has won on so many fields by his admirable fighting qualities.

France and Great Britain, having concluded with the Sublime Porte an alliance offensive and defensive against Russia, and issued their formal declarations, proceeded to active hostilities; and a British expedition intended for service in south-eastern Europe, left London in February, 1854. At that time it was the belief of some members of the British government, and of a large and influential class of politicians, that the Czar of Russia, when he perceived that England, always so slow and unready, had at last drawn the sword, would re-open negotiations; and it was commonly said that our troops would not be required to go beyond Malta. But the troops reached Malta, and then moved onward to Gallipoli and Scutari, and yet Russia resolutely preserved her defiant attitude. At length, the Allied generals, Lord Raglan (who, as Lord Fitzroy Somerset, had earned distinction under Wellington), and the Marshal St. Arnaud (who had seen much service in Algeria), were directed by their respective governments to undertake the siege and capture of Sebastopol, the great Crimean fortress and sea-port, which, from its position

and military strength, commanded the navigation of the Euxine, and constituted a permanent menace to Constantinople.

The troops embarked at Varna on the 29th of August; and the vast fleet of steamers and transports which conveyed them, sailed from Varna Bay a few days later. On the 14th of September it arrived off a point on the Crimean coast called Starve Akropshorri, or 'the Old Fort,' in Kalamita Bay, near Eupatoria. Under the direction of Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, the landing was accomplished with great speed and facility. The muster of the British forces, when thus disembarked in the Crimea, was as follows:—

1. The *First Division* (under H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, Major-General Bentinck, and Brigadier-General Sir Colin Campbell), including the Grenadier, Coldstream, and Scots Fusilier Guards, and the 42nd, 79th, and 93rd Highlanders.

2. The *Second Division* (Major-General Sir De Lacy Evans, Brigadier-Generals Pennefather and Adams), including the 30th, 41st, 47th, 49th, 55th, and 95th regiments.

3. The *Third Division* (Major-General Sir R. England, Brigadier-Generals Campbell and Eyre), including the 1st Royals, the 28th, 38th, 44th, 50th, and 68th regiments.

4. The *Fourth Division* (Major-General Sir George Cathcart), including the 20th, 21st, and 63rd regiments, the 2nd battalion of the Rifle Brigade, and the 46th and 57th regiments.

5. The *Light Division* (under General Sir George Brown, Major-General Codrington, and Brigadier-General Buller), including the 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade, the 7th Fusiliers, the 19th, the 23rd Fusiliers, the 33rd, 77th, and 88th regiments.

These divisions of infantry numbered about 26,000. The cavalry, 2000 strong, under the Earl of Lucan, the Earl of Cardigan, and Brigadier-General Scarlett, was composed of the Scots Greys, the 4th, 5th, and 6th

Dragoons, in the Heavy Brigade; and the 4th and the 13th Light Dragoons, 8th and 11th Hussars, and 17th Lancers, in the Light Brigade. There were sixty guns. The corps of Engineers was commanded by Sir John Burgoyne, a Peninsular veteran, and Brigadier-General Tylden.

The French contingent, under Marshal St Arnaud, Commander-in-Chief, and Generals Canrobert, Bosquet, Forey, and Prince Napoleon, as divisional commanders, numbered 30,204 foot and horse, with sixty-eight guns. There was also a Turkish division of 7000 men; so that the entire strength of the Allies may be stated at 64,000 men and 128 guns. 'These forces,' says Kinglake, 'partly by means of the draught animals at their command, and partly by the aid of the soldier himself, could carry by land the ammunition necessary for perhaps two battles, and the means of subsistence for three days. Their provisions beyond these limits were to be replenished from the ships. It was intended, therefore, that the fleets should follow the march of the armies, and that the invaders, without attempting to dart upon the inland route which connected the enemy with St Petersburg, should move straight upon the north side of Sebastopol by following the line of the coast.'

On Monday morning, September 19th, the Allies began their march, with their flank covered by the British fleet, which darkened the air with innumerable columns of smoke,—ready to shell the enemy should they attack them on the right, and commanding the land for nearly two miles from the shore. The Russian army, 39,000 strong (3600 of whom were cavalry), with ninety-one guns, under the command of Prince Mentschikoff, had taken up a strong position on the left bank of the Alma, where it was crossed by the Eupatoria and Sebastopol road. There rises a range of broken, irregular heights, varying in elevation from 100 to 600 feet; and along these rocky heights the Russians were distributed over a line of about one league in length,

strongly fortified with batteries, redoubts, and deep trenches. His extreme right touched the Kourgavi Hill; and this was made by Prince Mentschikoff the corner-stone of his position. Here was the Great Redoubt, armed with twelve heavy guns; and to defend this part of the ground was assembled a force of sixteen battalions of regular infantry, besides two battalions of sailors, and four batteries of field-artillery. The left wing, commanded by General Kiriakoff, occupied the hills of the so-called Telegraph Height, and consisted of thirteen battalions of regulars, with one or two companies of rifles, and a ten-gun battery of artillery. In the centre, prince Mentschikoff placed four battalions of light infantry, with three companies of rifles, under Prince Gortschakoff, and across the Great Road and along the slopes were posted four-and-twenty guns.

The Russian right and centre were opposed by the British, who, on the day of battle, put into the field 25,000 infantry and artillerymen, and 1000 cavalry. Against the Russian left were massed the 37,000 infantry and artillery of the French, supported by the fire of nine war steamers; so that the French faced much less than one-third part of the Russian force; while the British had to deal with much more than the other two-thirds. 'St Arnaud, with his Frenchmen alone, was to his then confronting adversaries in a proportion not very far differing from that of three to one; and the 7000 Turks that he also commanded increased yet further his great numerical preponderance, whilst, moreover, of guns he had sixty-eight to ten. Lord Raglan, on the other hand, was upon the whole fairly matched by his antagonists in numbers of men and guns; but the distinguishing characteristic of the task that awaited him was this: he had to attack troops entrenched, and entrenched, too, upon very strong ground.

'The heights about to be invaded by the French presented grave physical obstacles to their advance, but the greater part of them were undefended by troops, and had

nowhere been strengthened by field-works. The ground attacked by the British did not oppose great physical obstacles to the advance of the assailants, but it had been entrenched, and, besides, was so formed by nature as to give great destructive power, and, by consequence, great strength to an enemy defending it with the resources of modern warfare. The French were covered and supported on their right by the sea and the ships; on their left, by the British army. The British were covered on their right by the French, but they marched with their left flank quite bare. The French advanced upon heights well surveyed from the sea—except in an imperfect way from maps, the British knew nothing of the ground before them.' It will be seen, therefore, that the British, as compared with the French, fought under special disadvantages, and that the stress and strain of the battle would necessarily fall upon them. To them, therefore, belongs the honour of the victory which crowned the hard day's fight.

It was a special disadvantage that the British, in all their movements, were hampered by the necessity of waiting for their Allies. The kind of joint command held by Lord Raglan and Marshal St Arnaud was not favourable to unity of design or rapidity of operation. In the great war with France, *tempore Annæ*, we fought, it is true, with foreign nations as our Allies, but the command-in-chief rested with the British general, and he was able, therefore, to carry out unhesitatingly the combinations on which he resolved. But no such superiority of rank could be claimed by Lord Raglan, and he was constantly compelled to defer to the susceptibilities, and accept the opinion of his colleague, with results which were by no means satisfactory. Again, Lord Raglan, though a gallant and courteous gentleman, and a soldier of experience, had no genius for war, and was unable to enforce his views by any authority derived from successful military service. The French commander, in this respect, was only his equal, his principal exploits had

had Algeria for their scene, and the enemies he had beaten were undisciplined and badly armed Arabs. Thus it will be seen that the Allied armies suffered from the want of an adequate directing and controlling power.

As to the British army it must also be observed that during the forty years of peace which had elapsed since the battle of Waterloo, its organisation had undergone no improvement, and was unfitted in a great measure to cope with the changed conditions of warfare. The material was as good as of old; there was the stubborn bravery, and the quiet endurance, and the grim tenacity which had characterised the British soldier in half-a-hundred victorious campaigns; but if he retained the virtues he retained also the defects of his predecessors, and was still wanting in freedom of individual intelligence, and the capacity of adaptation to circumstances. His officers were as distinguished for chivalrous courage as they had been under Churchill or Wellesley; but were equally incapable of independent action, and in scientific knowledge were inferior to the officers of almost any European army. Little improvement had taken place in the weapons with which our regiments were armed; and the rust of a long peace had eaten into the machinery of that all-important department, the commissariat—all-important, for if a British army be not fed, it cannot fight. These were grave deficiencies; but they were all the graver because their existence was not generally known or suspected.

As early as half-past five on the morning of September the 20th, the main body of the French army was under arms, and ready to begin its march for the purpose of forcing the Russian position. There was some vexatious delay before the British army could be got into line, and it was half-past eleven before the British left found themselves in touch with the French right. Twice again there were 'protracted halts,'—the second taking place at a distance of about a mile-and-a-half from the banks of the

Alma. 'From the spot where the forces were halted the ground sloped gently down to the river's side; and though some men lay prostrate under the burning sun, with little thought except of fatigue, there were others who keenly scanned the ground before them, well knowing that now at last the long-expected conflict would begin. They could make out the course of the river from the dark belt of gardens and vineyards which marked its banks; and men with good eyes could descry a slight seam running across a rising ground beyond the river, and could see, too, some dark squares or oblongs, encroaching like small patches of culture upon the broad downs.' The seam was the Great Redoubt; the square-looking marks that stained the green sides of the hills were an army in order of battle.

The plan of operations finally decided upon by the two commanders provided that the French should attack the Russian left, and, in conjunction with one British division, their centre, while Lord Raglan directed the mass of his troops against the Russian right. At one o'clock the advance sounded along the lines, and the two armies moved forward abreast. The French and the Turks in dense close masses,—the British in a thin red line, only two deep. At twenty-eight minutes past one, the Allied war steamers opened fire, endeavouring to reach the solid bodies of Russian infantry which occupied the Telegraph Height. Almost immediately, the Russians began to cannonade the British line, which lay down in patience and quiet, waiting for the French attack. After a tedious interval of suspense, Lord Raglan resolved to take the initiative, and gave the welcome order. The British soldiers sprang with glad haste to their feet, and under a terrible fire, which swept them down by scores, drove the Russians from the heights. The Guards, under the Duke of Cambridge, behaved splendidly, bearing the pressure of a heavy cannonade with the greatest calmness. Nor were the men of the Light Division inferior in soldierly conduct. The Redoubt was carried by

the bayonet; and in this phase of the battle occurred some incidents, which vividly remind us of what excellent stuff the British fighting-men are made.

‘A small child-like youth ran forward before the enemy, carrying a colour. This was young Anstruther. He carried the Queen’s colour of the Royal Welsh. Fresh from the games of English school life, he ran fast; for heading all who strove to keep up with him, he gained the redoubt, and dug the butt-end of the flag-staff into the parapet; and then for a moment he stood, holding it tight, and taking breath. Then he was shot dead; but his small hands still clasping the flag-staff, drew it down along with him, and the crimson silk lay covering the boy with its folds. His successor in charge of the colour, namely, centre sergeant, Luke O’Connor, was brought down at nearly that moment by a shot which struck his breast; but William Evans, a swift footed soldier, ran forward, and had caught up the fallen standard, when O’Connor, finding strength enough to be able to rise, made haste to assert his right, and then proudly upholding the colour, he laid claim to the Great Redoubt on behalf of the Royal Welsh. The colour floating high in the air, and seen by our people far and near, kindled in them a raging love for the ground where it stood. Breathless men found speech. General Edington still in the front, uncovered, saluting the crisis, waved his cap for a sign to his people, and then, riding straight at one of the embrasures, leapt his grey Arab into the breast-work. There were some eager and swift footed soldiers who sprang the parapet nearly at the same moment, more followed. . . . At each flank of the work, no less than along its whole front, agile men were now fast bounding in. The enemy’s still lingering skirmishers began to fall back, and descended—some of them slowly—into the dip where their battalions were massed. The bulk of our soldiery were up, and they flooded in over the parapet, hurraing, jumping over, hurraing!—a joyful English word.’

After the capture of the redoubt there was a brief indecision on the part of the advance, which caused much loss of life and a temporary falling-back ; but a couple of guns were brought up, which told with great effect upon the Russians, and the third division coming into action in support of the first line, the advance was resumed, and our 'thin red line' wrested victory from the reluctant Russians. The Highland Brigade, under Sir Colin Campbell, and the Guards, under the Duke of Cambridge, pressed forward with an irresistible movement, great honour being won by the stately 'Black Watch' and the impetuous 93rd, which, by their own impulse, drove back the Russian columns in sad disorder. The Kourgavi Hill was ours, and in this part of the field the Russians were retreating rapidly.

The French assault had been less persistent and less successful, until, encouraged by the example of their Allies, they revived their old enthusiasm, and swarming up the Telegraph Height, made it their own, after a sharp contest. Beaten at all points the Russian army then gave way : it had done its best, but the superior courage and stronger purpose of the Allies had proved too much for it, and with shattered battalions it sullenly and reluctantly drew off from the field of battle. Its loss, including five generals and twenty-three field-officers, was 5709 killed and wounded. That of the French was about sixty killed and 500 wounded, while the British army lost 362 killed, with eighty-one officers, 102 sergeants, and 1438 rank and file wounded. In all, 2002.

Speaking generally, the Battle of the Alma proceeded on the following lines ;—

The French occupied the belt of empty ground between the sea and the enemy, and then undertook the attack upon his left wing ; but not without discomfiture, from their inability, owing to the ruggedness of the ground, to bring up their artillery, and their obedience to a law of French tactic, which prohibits their infantry from fighting on open ground

without the support of cannon. This discomfiture involved them in no little danger ; for so large a proportion of their force was disposed on the extreme left and along the sea-shore, that for nearly an hour any Russian general who had had an eye to detect the gap between their several divisions might have won as signal a victory as, from a similar cause, Wellington won at Salamanca. But Prince Mentschikoff did not improve the opportunity, preferring to waste his time and his men in unprofitable, and, indeed, unmeaning manœuvres. The keen sense which the French had of their failure, and the galling fire to which they were exposed, was beginning to arouse in them feelings of discontent and despondency, when Lord Raglan, conscious of the danger, ordered the final advance of his infantry, though General Canrobert and Prince Napoleon had not, as previously, agreed, established themselves on the left. Our foot moved forward with splendid vigour, and in a few minutes Codrington's battalions had not only repulsed two Russian columns, but stormed and carried the Great Redoubt.

On the field thus won the tide of battle rolled tumultuously to and fro. The supports not coming up at the critical moment, and the Russian masses gathering around, Codrington's force, in some confusion, fell back ; and in this retreat, dragged with it the centre battalion of the Guards' Brigade. Almost simultaneously, General Kiriakoff's column drove Canrobert from the crest he had reached, and the prospects of the Allies underwent an eclipse. But the British soldiery, with their natural doggedness of temper, slowly recovered ground, moving forward foot by foot with a steady, irresistible pressure ; while a couple of guns, planted by Lord Raglan on a commanding eminence, silenced the Russian batteries in front, and, plunging deadly showers of shot into Prince Mentschikoff's infantry reserves, forced them from the field. The break-down of the Russian centre compelled the retreat of the left wing, under Kiriakoff, which had already blenched and wavered

before the fire of the French artillery. He retreated, unmolested by the French infantry, to a point about two miles from the Alma; and soon afterwards the tricolor might be seen waving on the Telegraph Height. At the same moment Colonel Hood's grenadiers, on the other extremity of the battle-field, attacked the battalions arrayed on the Kourgavi Hill, where the enemy's whole strength was speedily broken up in ruin by the 'thin red line.' All that remained was for the British artillery to pour its fire into the retreating masses of the Muscovites.

'The Battle of the Alma,' says the historian of the Crimean War, 'seemed to clear the prospects of the campaign and even of the war. It confirmed to the Allies that military ascendancy over Russia which had been more than half-gained already by the valour of the Ottoman soldiery. It lent the current sanction of a victory to the hazardous enterprise of the invasion. It established the Allies as invaders in a province of Russia. It did more. It offered them even Sebastopol, but always, nevertheless, upon condition that they would lay instant hands on the prize.'

British regiments engaged

1st Royals, 7th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 28th, 30th, 38th, 41st, 42nd, 44th, 46th, 47th, 49th, 50th, 55th, 57th, 63rd, 68th, 77th, 79th, 88th, 93rd, 95th.

Grenadier, Coldstream, and Scots Fusilier Guards.

Rifle Brigade :—2nd and 3rd battalions.

Cavalry :—4th, 5th, and 6th Dragoon Guards; 4th and 13th Light Dragoons; 8th and 11th Hussars; and 17th Lancers.

It is now known, from the acknowledgment of Russian authorities, that if the Allies, as Lord Raglan desired, had advanced on the Belbec, crossed that river, and assaulted the northern forts, Sebastopol, the great Russian military

and commercial depôt on the Black Sea, must have fallen. But various difficulties were interposed by the French marshal, and, it must in fairness be added, the unprepared condition of the Russian fortress was conjectured by none. However this may be, a serious delay took place, fatal to the character of the expedition as a surprise; and the Russians had time to recover from the despondency engendered by defeat. Reinforcements reached them; and under the direction of General de Todleben, an engineer of the most fertile inventiveness, the defences of Sebastopol were rapidly enlarged and strengthened.

The issue of the great fight on the Alma was still, however, a source of discouragement to the Russians, who endeavoured to account for their defeat by the pleas of numerical inferiority, and the raw inexperience of their troops. They condemned, and not unjustly, the management of the battle by their generals, who, no doubt, had been guilty of grave tactical errors. It is probable they knew, as Russell says they ought to have known, the impregnable nature of their position, if defended by resolute infantry; and the conviction must have been borne in upon them strongly, that the British and French—and, more particularly the British—‘proved in every way on that memorable day the superiors of the Muscovites in brilliant courage, in audacity, steadiness, discipline, and endurance of fire.’

BATTLE OF BALAKLAVA, *October 25*

On the morning of the 23rd of September the Allies resumed their advance, and descended into the valley of the Katcha, throwing forward their cavalry as far as Duvanskoi, on the Belbec, a village in sight of Sebastopol. Next day the two armies gained the crest of the hills which intervene between the Katcha and the Belbec. An inspection of the fortifications on the northern or Svernazu side

of the city, convinced the commanders that an attack at that point would fail to be successful; and at the suggestion of Lord Raglan,* they undertook, on the 25th, a bold and difficult flank march across country with the view of establishing their base of operations on the south side. During this movement a bold and determined enemy might have inflicted upon them terrible loss, but it was admirably carried out, and no attempt was made to impede it. The Allies arrived on the 28th, within sight of Sebastopol, and took up a position in front of it, the port and town of Balaklava being occupied by the British on the right, or east side, and the French securing the bays of Kamiesh and Kuzatch on the left, or west.

On Friday, September 29th, Marshal St Arnaud, whose illness had compelled him to resign, while on the march, the command of the French army to General Canrobert, was removed on board the 'Berthollet' in a dying state. Before sunset on the same day he expired.

Some valuable time was lost in discussing the propriety of an immediate assault, which was strongly urged by General Sir George Cathcart and Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons. Lord Raglan appears to have favoured the proposal; but Sir John Burgoyne was against it, on account of the strength of the works erected by Todleben, and General Canrobert could not be induced to accept it. The siege-train was therefore landed, and the British began the investment of the town on the south-east side, while they also undertook to defend the Chersonese from any attack by Mentschikoff. The enterprise to which the Allies thus committed themselves was, in several respects, unparalleled in the history of warfare. The forces with which they proposed to besiege a great fortress, girdled with formidable works, were scarcely superior to those which had been arrayed in its defence. A blockade could not be attempted,

* It was recommended to him by General Sir John Burgoyne.

and on one side the enemy could communicate freely and uninterruptedly with the open country. By sinking several men-of-war across the harbour, he had rendered it inaccessible to the war-ships of the Allies. Owing to various circumstances, he was free to devote all his vast resources to the defence of an arc of only four miles, which compassed Sebastopol and its suburbs on the land side. And even from this narrow front we must make a deduction, because, towards its flanks, both east and west, the position of the garrison was so strong, that a belt some 3000 yards long was all the space which was really likely to be fought for. The Allied commanders, by allowing the Russians to occupy the heights on the north side of Sebastopol had deprived themselves of the means of completing its investment; while the vacillation and delay, due to divided counsels, had put it out of their power to carry it by assault.

In the disposal of their forces, when the Allied generals had decided on a siege, they had to provide for two objects; first, for the prosecution of the siege itself, and second, for protection against any interrupting attack.

General Canrobert, therefore, divided his army into two bodies or army-corps, each consisting of two French divisions. One of these, under General Forey, was charged with siege-duties, and encamped with its front towards the town of Sebastopol, its left resting on the sea at Streleska Bay, and its right extending to the Harbour ravine. The French forces drew their supplies from the Bays of Kamiesh and Kazatch.

On the other hand, all the British infantry divisions were employed in the business of the siege, but were so posted that they could be called upon for the defence of the Chersonese at its north-eastern angle. The British army had its left on the Harbour ravine, and thence stretched eastward to the verge of the Sapouné steeps. It drew its supplies from Balaklava.

‘In the task of securing their armies against attacks in

flank and rear, the Allies were much favoured by the conformation of the ground; for the besieging forces lay camped upon the Chersonese, and, except towards Sebastopol which lay in their front, the upland they thus made their home is encompassed by either the sea, or acclivities in most places formidable. There, indeed, is an opening at the Pass by the Col de Balaklava; and at that north-eastern angle of the Chersonese, which has come to be called Mount Inkerman, the ascent in some places is not of a forbidding steepness; but elsewhere the Sapouné heights are by nature so strong as almost to form of themselves a sufficing rampart of defence.

‘The task of covering the siege, by defending the Col, and the greater part of the Sapouné Heights, was assigned to that moiety of the French army which consisted of the first and second divisions; and Canrobert entrusted this force to the command of General Bosquet. The Turkish battalions under the order of the French commander took part in the same duty. General Bosquet, however, did not occupy the more northerly part of the Sapouné Heights; for there, the right wing of the English, though also engaged in the siege, stood charged to defend the position. . . . Men of forethought perceived the expediency of throwing up works on Mount Inkerman, but the forces there in charge were the British, and they—with their small dwindling numbers, and being eagerly intent on the siege—did not choose to devote any toil to a simply defensive object.’ Against this neglect, a neglect which, as we shall see, led to very serious consequences, Sir John Bourgoyne earnestly but vainly protested.

It is, of course, impossible within our scanty limits to do more than glance at the principal incidents of the siege. The Allies opened fire from their batteries on the 17th of October, supported by an attack from the fleets upon the great sea-defences, the Quarantine Fort and Fort Constantine. The French war-ships bombarded the former; the

efforts of the English were concentrated on the latter, with its adjacent batteries. Very little, however, was accomplished by either fleet, owing in no small degree to the long range at which the French admiral persisted in engaging. The total loss on the side of the Russians was 138 killed and wounded; while the Allies lost 520 men (203 French and 317 British).

The 5th of October is memorable as the day of the cavalry action at Balaklava.

The Russians in force made a fierce attack on the line held here by the small Turkish contingent; and Lord Raglan hastily ordered up his first and fourth divisions to their support. As the action developed in importance General Canrobert also despatched a body of troops to assist in the defence. The command of the British detachment posted at Balaklava to guard the sea-communication was entrusted to a veteran of proved capacity, Sir Colin Campbell (afterwards Lord Clyde); who, in order to protect the town, which the British had converted into a depot, he drew up his 93rd Highlanders a little in front of the Balaklava road. After firing a few rounds the Turks broke and retreated, exposing to all the hazards of battle the small body of gallant Scots. The Turks were re-formed in companies on the flanks of the Highlanders in the hope that, in this position, they would hold their ground; but on the approach of the advanced squadrons of the Russian cavalry, they fired a volley at 800 yards, and again took to flight. The Highlanders were drawn up in the usual British formation, a line two deep. 'I did not think it worth while,' said Sir Colin Campbell, 'to form them even four deep!' Against this 'thin red streak tipped with a line of steel,' the Russian horsemen vainly rode, and, after a brief contest, fell back discomfited, with scores of saddles emptied by the steady British fire.

While the Highlanders were rejoicing in their defeat of the Muscovite cavalry, a new subject of merriment was

offered to them; for, turning their attention to the retreating Turks, they perceived that a new and terrible foe had sought to stay their flight. Out from the camp of the Scottish regiment came an irate and stalwart Highland female, with an uplifted stick in her hand: and then, if ever in history, 'the fortunes of Islam waned low beneath the manifest ascendant of the Cross: for the blows dealt by this Christian woman fell thick on the backs of the Faithful. She believed, it seems, that, besides being guilty of running away, the Turks meant to pillage her camp; and the blows she delivered were not mere expressions of scorn; but actual and fierce punishment. In one instance, she laid hold of a strong-looking, burly Turk, and held him fast until she had beaten him for some time, and seemingly with great fury. She also applied much invective. Notwithstanding all graver claims upon their attention, the men of the 93rd were able to witness this incident. It mightily pleased and amused them.'

The main body of the Russian cavalry now appeared upon the hills, as if with the intention of descending into the Balaklava valley. In effecting this movement they came upon the flank of six squadrons of British dragoons (the 5th, the Scots Greys, and the Inniskillings) which, under Brigadier Scarlett, had been despatched by Lord Raglan to support the scattered Turks. These horsemen were advancing in open columns when they discovered the powerful masses of Muscovite cavalry on the ridge above them, fronting towards the valley, looking down almost at right angles upon the flank. Scarlett immediately resolved on forming line to his left, and charging with his few hundred sabres. Those nearest to him were the second squadron of the Inniskillings and two squadrons of the Scots Greys; but with these he at once began his audacious advance, ordering the rest to support. At this juncture the Earl of Lucan rode up: he approved of his lieutenant's proposed attack, and undertook to bring up the remainder of the

Heavy Brigades. Gallantly, therefore, with his 300 troopers, Scarlett dashed up the green hill-side to challenge the broad deep masses of three thousand Russian horsemen. The Greys and Inniskillings, eager, firm, and impetuous, gave a hoarse cheer as they crossed swords with the enemy; and shivering the front rank by dint of hard fighting, opened and cut their way in. At first it seemed as if the scanty stream of red had been wholly swallowed up and lost in the great ocean of blue and grey; but in a few minutes it was seen that the British dragoons had prevailed over their adversaries, and above the clank and clash of steel rose a ringing hurrah of victory.

The 4th Dragoons, the 5th, and the Royals then came up, and charged the Russians in flank with great effect, enabling the Greys, who had been fighting each for his own hand to rally and re-form, while the enemy, giving way on all sides, dashed helter-skelter across the heights. In this remarkable engagement, which is almost without parallel in the annals of war, the Heavy Brigade lost seventy-eight killed or wounded. The loss of the Russians was very much larger; and such was the moral effect produced upon them by so astonishing a feat of arms that, throughout the rest of the Crimean struggle, their cavalry could not be induced to face the English horsemen. 'It was truly magnificent,' said a French general; 'and to one who could see the enormous numbers opposed to them, the whole valley being filled with Russian troopers, the victory of the Heavy Brigade was the most glorious thing imaginable.' 'Greys! gallant Greys!' exclaimed Sir Colin Campbell; 'I am sixty-one years old, but if I were young again, I should be proud to be in your ranks.' It was computed that, from the beginning of General Scarlett's charge to the breaking up of the Russian squadrons, the contest lasted only eight minutes. But what minutes! To each man in that little band of British warriors, a minute must have seemed an age, as, with cut and thrust and parry, he contended strongly against what

seemed overwhelming odds. Had the Light Cavalry taken up the pursuit, the Russians might almost have been annihilated ; but their leader, Lord Cardigan, had no knowledge of war, and his superior officer, Lord Lucan, was vague and contradictory in his orders. The opportunity was lost; and the Light Brigade, after sharing in this notable exploit only as inactive and apparently uninterested onlookers, was left to vindicate their repute for chivalrous courage by another feat of arms, not less brilliant, though, unfortunately not so successful.

Perceiving that the enemy was much weakened and greatly discouraged by the retreat of his cavalry and artillery, Lord Raglan resolved upon recovering the heights, which, in the early part of the day's battle, had been abandoned. He gave orders, therefore, for the cavalry to advance, supported by two divisions of infantry, which were slowly coming up. Lord Lucan contrived to misunderstand these instructions, and contented himself with mounting his horsemen, moving his Light Brigade to a position across the valley, and halting his own on the slope of the rise above them. Not unnaturally the Commander-in-Chief grew impatient at this extraordinary want of energy ; and observing a movement among the enemy, which apparently indicated an intention of carrying off as trophies the English guns taken from the Turks, he called to his side Captain Nolan, a brilliant cavalry officer, and despatched him to Lord Lucan with another and more peremptory mandate. Down the steep galloped Nolan at headlong pace, and placed in Lord Lucan's hand his Commander-in-Chief's order, which ran as follows :

‘ Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, and try to prevent the enemy's carrying away the guns. Troops of horse artillery may accompany. Fresh cavalry is on your left. Immediate.’

The purport of these directions would seem to be sufficiently obvious. The guns to which Lord Raglan referred

were evidently those which the Russians in the morning had taken from the Turks. Yet Lord Lucan professed himself unable to understand; and began to urge the uselessness of an attack upon (as he conceived) the Russian artillery and the danger attending it. Nolan warmly exclaimed—‘Lord Raglan’s orders are, that the cavalry should attack immediately.’ ‘Attack, sir! attack what? What guns, sir?’ Throwing his head back, and pointing towards the valley, the aide-de-camp replied, with a touch of scorn in his voice,—‘There, my lord, is your enemy; there, my lord, are your guns.’ That he was thinking only of the English guns, and did not intend his gesture to be construed as indicating any particular direction, all are now agreed; but Lord Lucan, who was angry and sullen, wrongly understood him to mean that the cavalry were to ride into the valley, which was lined on each side by Russian infantry, and charge the Russian battery at the head of it, behind which their horse had been partly re-formed after their defeat. Accordingly he rode off to Lord Cardigan, his brigadier, and intimated that he was to attack the Russians in the valley, about three-quarters of a mile distant, with the 13th Light Dragoons and the 17th Lancers. Greatly surprised at an order which meant destruction to his small force, Lord Cardigan replied,—‘Certainly, sir; but allow me to point out to you that the Russians have a battery in the valley in our front, and batteries and riflemen on each flank.’ ‘I know it,’ replied Lord Lucan, shrugging his shoulders, ‘but Lord Raglan will have it. We have no choice but to obey.’

The Light Brigade was then drawn up as follows:—the 13th Light Dragoons (Captain Oldham) and the 17th Lancers (Captain Morris) in the first line, led by Lord Cardigan himself; the 11th Hussars, under Colonel Douglas, in the second line; and, in the third line, the 4th Light Dragoons, under Lord George Paget, and the 8th Hussars, under Colonel Shewell. Each regiment stood extended in

line two deep. Scarlett's Heavy Brigade was to support, and with two of its regiments, the Greys and the Royals, Lord Lucan resolved to be present in person. The trumpet sounded, and with their gallant leader in advance, the Light Horsemen rode forward into the fatal valley at full gallop, and, receiving as they went the fire from the Russian infantry on each flank, charged straight at the battery. At this moment Captain Nolan rode swiftly across their front, waving his sword and shouting, and wishing to convey to officers and men that they were taking the wrong direction, but he was disregarded, and the death ride continued. To Nolan was given no further chance of correcting the grievous blunder. A Russian shell, exploding close beside him, threw out a fragment which struck him in the chest, and 'tore a way into his heart.' His sword dropped from his hand, and his charger, no longer feeling its rider's guidance, swerved round, and galloped back towards the advancing brigade. Thus the dead horseman passed on through the interval of the 13th Light Dragoons before he fell from his saddle.

Under a tremendous cross fire, which emptied many a saddle and killed or disabled many a horse, the British cavalry undauntedly pressed forward, preserving the most admirable order, with their commander still in front, until they reached the battery. Then it was 'every man for himself.' A volley from many of the pieces tore great gaps in their ranks; but the survivors, some half-hundred perhaps, dashed into the smoke-cloud and the mass of horsemen behind it. The supports quickly came up; and for a few minutes a sharp contention prevailed. Some stopped to fight in the battery and capture the guns; others spurred on to sabre the Muscovite troopers. Lord Cardigan was attacked by a couple of Cossacks; but beating them off, he fell back and re-passed through the Russian battery. Then, seeing, as he imagined, the remnants of his first line in retreat, he rode back to the ground occupied by the Heavy

Brigade,—a not unnatural action, though it afterwards exposed him to severe criticism.

Meanwhile, the combat between the British and Russian horsemen continued. A bold charge of the French Chasseurs d'Afrique against the Russian infantry on the left side of the valley, was of signal assistance to our struggling troopers,—the number of whom, when the enemy began to fall back, did not exceed 220 or 230 undisabled, and of these only about 170 were in a state of formation. In a few minutes the enemy recovered from the breathless surprise induced by so daring, so exceptional a passage of arms, and realizing the fact that a mere handful of British horsemen was in their midst, and that they must ride back through the valley of fire before they could regain their own lines, pushed forward a swarm of lancers to cut off their retreat. Colonel Shewell, who, as senior officer present, took the command, immediately drew together the small knots of lancers and hussars within reach, and rode straight at the Muscovite spears with a shock that completely broke them up, and scattered them far and wide.

Lord George Paget and Colonel Douglas, rallying and re-forming a few troops of the 11th Hussars and the 4th Light Dragoons, also succeeded in getting clear of the enemy, and with shot and shell dropping round them, made their way back to the point from which their 'wild charge' had begun.

When the remnants of the brigade had formed up, Lord Cardigan addressed them,—'Men! it is a mad-brained trick, but it is no fault of mine.' Some of the men answered, 'Never mind, my lord! we are ready to go again.' Lord Cardigan replied,—'No no, men! you have done enough.' The charge, the combat, and the retreat occupied in all about twenty minutes. The Heavy Brigade lent no assistance, having been halted by Lord Lucan as soon as they got under fire.

'It was upon one of the slopes which look southward

towards Balaklava that the muster took place; and, for some time, stragglers and riderless chargers were coming in at intervals; but at length there was a numbering of horses, and afterwards the melancholy roll-call began. As often as it appeared that to the name called out there was no one present to answer, men contributed what knowledge they had as to the fate of their missing comrade, saying when and where they had last seen him. More or less truly, if they knew it not before, men learned the fate of their friends from this dismal inquest. And then also came the time for the final and deliberate severance of many a friendship between the dragoon and his charger; for the farriers, with their pistols in hand, were busied in the task of shooting the ruined horses.'

When it went into action the brigade numbered 673 horsemen. Of these 163 were killed and 134 wounded, the chief loss being incurred as they descended into the valley. 475 horses were killed and 42 wounded. Well might Lord Raglan condemn an achievement which, splendid as it was, contributed to no useful result. And well might General Bosquet exclaim, in words which have become historical.—
'*C'est magnifique; mais ce n'est pas la guerre!*'

'When can their glory fade?
Oh, the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made,
Honour the Light Brigade!
Noble Six Hundred!'

'The perversity which sent our squadrons to their doom,' says Mr Kinglake, 'is only after all the mortal part of the story. Half-forgotten already, the origin of the Light Cavalry Charge is fading away out of sight. Its splendour remains. And splendour like this is something more than the mere outward adornment which graces the life of a nation. It is strength—strength other than that of mere riches, and other than that of gross numbers—strength

carried by proud descent from one generation to another—strength awaiting the trials that are to come.’

Regiments engaged in the Cavalry Fight of Balaklava.

Charge of the Heavy Brigade—The Royals, the Scots Greys, the Inniskillings, the 4th and 5th Dragoons.

Charge of the Light Brigade—The 4th and 13th Light Dragoons, the 8th and 11th Hussars, and the 17th Lancers.

BATTLE OF INKERMANN, *November 5*

The day after the Balaklava fight was marked by a Russian attack in force on the position occupied by the second division, under Sir De Lacy Evans. It was met with vigour and gallantly repulsed,—the enemy’s colours being literally chased over the Tchernaya ridge, and down the slope towards the sea-shore.

The flank of the second division, however, was dangerously exposed on the side of the valley of Inkerman; a condition of affairs to which General Evans had more than once directed the attention of the Commander-in-Chief, but which, from want of sufficient troops, he was in a great measure powerless to repair. The key of the Allied lines on the north-east, Mount Inkerman, was necessarily a post of the greatest strategic importance; and there was special reason, therefore, to apprehend that the enemy would attempt its capture. On the 5th of November the second division was under the command of General Pennefather, Sir De Lacy Evans being ill on board ship. It lay encamped near the isthmus which connects Mount Inkerman with the main of the Chersonese upland, and had a strength of 2956 officers and privates. About three-quarters of a mile in the rear lay the brigade of Guards, under the Duke of Cambridge, and Major-General Bentinck. Away on the left was posted Codrington’s division. To the right, about

a mile-and-a-half from the Guards, and two miles from the camp of the second division, lay the main body of the French 'Army of Observation,' under General Bosquet.

On Saturday evening, November 4, the Russian generals, who for some days past had been gathering up troops from the north, made their final preparations for what was intended to be a mortal blow to the besieging army, and massed 40,000 men for an attack upon Mount Inkerman. At the westernmost angle of the Sebastopol defences, a powerful sortie was to be made for the purpose of occupying the attention of the French. Simultaneously, an army corps under Prince Gortschakoff, was to keep General Bosquet engaged, until the British were driven from Inkerman, after which he was to ascend the heights in turn, and then the Allies, with 60,000 men on their shattered flank, would be compelled to raise the siege. To excite the ardour of the troops by an appeal to their loyalty and their religious sentiments, two of the Imperial princes arrived in camp, and imposing services were celebrated by the priests of the Greek Church. They were incited to remember that the Allies were not only invaders of the empire, but enemies of the orthodox faith, and supporters of the Moslem. It was, therefore, with renewed enthusiasm that, through the gray mist of the wet November morning, the Muscovite soldiery rapidly ascended the broken acclivities, and rushed upon the second division. Simultaneous attacks were delivered against the French under Canrobert and Bosquet; but as these were subordinate to the struggle on Mount Inkerman, it is enough to record that, after a severe encounter, they were beaten off.

The assault on the British position was of the most desperate and determined character. Fresh Russian regiments came up, one after another, in swift succession, and it seemed probable that the scanty line of British bayonets would be overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers. Though

taken almost by surprise, the British maintained their ground with a constancy which has never been surpassed. As soon as the object of the enemy was clearly understood, Sir George Cathcart hurried his division to the support of the second; General Buller brought up 650 men of the Light Division, and Sir Richard England led forward the 1st Royals and the 50th. In another part of the field, the so-called Victoria Ridge, General Codrington, with 1100 men, strenuously held his ground against a host of enemies. At the beginning of the battle, Sir De Lacy Evans, in spite of his serious illness, came ashore, and appeared on the battlefield, though he did not take the command from General Pennefather's capable hands. The force and fury of the action necessarily raged around Mount Inkerman, and ravine and height alike were disputed with the fiercest obstinacy. The British fought in small bodies of two or three hundred men—rallying and reforming as circumstances required—soldiers of different regiments fighting side by side, under whatsoever leadership happened to be forthcoming. Lord Raglan was quickly on the ground, and ordered a couple of 18-pounders to be brought up to assist the defence; but neither by him nor by the divisional generals was any manœuvring attempted. Nor was such manœuvring possible; friends and foes being inextricably mixed in the hurly-burly.

Inkerman has happily been called 'the soldiers' battle.' 'It was a series of dreadful deeds of daring, of sanguinary hand-to-hand fights, of despairing rallies, of desperate assaults, in glens and valleys, in brushwood glades and remote dells—from which the conquerors, Russian or British, issued only to engage fresh foes, till our old supremacy, so rudely assailed, was triumphant, and the battalions of the Czar gave way before our steady courage and the chivalrous fire of France.' This is a description as true as it is vivid. At Inkerman there were none of those combined movements

which generally decide the fortune of the day; no precipitation of an overwhelming force against some particular point; no brilliant charge of cavalry or solid advance of infantry; no subtle combination dictated by the genius of the general in command. The battle was made up of isolated attacks and defences, and decided by the courage of individual soldiers. Mr Kinglake divides it into seven distinct periods or stages, between a quarter to six in the morning and eight o'clock in the evening, when the Russians accomplished their retreat; but so far as we can gather from the records before us, at no time was there any absolute intermission in the fighting. Throughout that long and desperate day death was very busy, and the mortality among the generals and officers was exceptional, for from the nature of the combat they were as much exposed as any of the rank and file. Sir George Cathcart fell early in the fight, shot through the heart by a musket-ball. Generals Goldie and Strangeways were also killed; and Brigadier-Generals Adams and Torrens mortally wounded.

About ten o'clock, General Bosquet was able to come to the assistance of the British with a body of French infantry, and reinforcements rapidly arriving, he succeeded in checking the Russians most on the left, while our men, with stern resolution, repelled all assaults directed against the right and centre of their position. Towards noon the Allied infantry on Mount Inkerman numbered between 4000 and 5000 British, and 7000 or 8000 French; and General Pennefather had so far succeeded in turning the tide of battle that he sent a true 'soldier's message' to Lord Raglan, to the effect that, if adequately reinforced, he could end the fight with the Russians, and 'lick them to the devil.' But Canrobert, though solicited by Lord Raglan, showed no willingness to act on the offensive; and it was clear that what had to be done must be done by the British alone.

So the scattered groups of fighting men were drawn together; a battery was carried; a forward movement was vigorously begun and resolutely sustained; and baffled in their well-conceived design, the Russians, soon after one o'clock, began to fall back. By three o'clock they had abandoned the higher ground of Mount Inkerman, leaving behind them, in grim testimony to the vehemency of their attack and the resistless character of the defence, the ghastliest heaps of dead and wounded. They had still a long distance to cover, pursued by the relentless musketry of the Allies, and it was eight o'clock when the last piece of cannon passed back within their lines.

At Inkerman the total loss of the Russians was 10,729 killed, wounded, and prisoners. Out of a fighting strength of 7464 infantry and 200 cavalry, the British lost 597 killed and 1760 wounded (including Generals Sir George Brown and Bentinck). The French estimated their casualties at 13 officers and 130 men killed, and 36 officers and 750 wounded.

The siege continued to drag its slow length along. From the 14th till the 16th of November, a great storm raged, doing no small damage on land to the Allied camps, and at sea effecting a deplorable amount of destruction—the *Prince* and other store vessels perishing. The winter of 1854-55 proved to be one of great severity, and owing to the grave defects in the military organisation of the country, our troops suffered terribly from cold and disease. The official world, in its thralls of red tape and formality, ignored the distress that was rapidly reducing their efficiency; until moved into action by the indignation of the public, whose attention and interest had been engaged by Dr William Howard Russell's admirably graphic letters in *The Times*. It was on this occasion that the usefulness of the 'Special Correspondent' was first experienced, for it is certain that, but for Dr Russell's revelations, very little in

the way of reform would have been accomplished. But 'public opinion' is an all powerful influence; and being brought to bear upon Parliament, and through Parliament upon the executive, 'it inaugurated' an era of revolution at Whitehall and the Horse Guards, the end of which is not yet. A succession of important changes has taken place, with the general result of greatly increasing the efficiency of our army, and improving the position of the private soldier. In the last twenty years we have seen the abolition of the purchase system, to the infinite advantage of the poorer class of officers; the adoption of an enlightened recruiting policy, by which the *morale* of the ranks has been largely elevated; and the formation of an effective reserve, now amounting to some 40,000 thoroughly trained soldiers. The short service system has removed one of the chief obstacles to the popularity of the army as a profession among the great body of the people. Wise and liberal provision has been made for the education of our recruits; the health of the rank and file is sedulously cared for; good conduct liberally rewarded; wholesome recreation for their hours of leisure furnished; barrack accommodation has been considerably improved. As for the soldier's equipment it has been radically altered; and he no longer carries on his shoulders in a long march a weight sufficient to exhaust his physical energies. Something, though still too little, is being done to train him as a marksman; and his value as an offensive instrument has been more than doubled by placing in his hands a weapon of precision which enables him to harass the enemy at long range. These changes have not been accomplished without loud protests from partisans of the ancient ways,—the *laudatores temporis acti*, who cannot tear themselves from the old traditions, and look upon every forward movement as an inevitable step towards chaos; but the increasing popularity of the service is an evidence in their favour that cannot be ignored, while

no one who has studied the Egyptian campaigns will deny that the British army as an effective war machine stands higher in value than at any previous period of its history.

CHAPTER IV

THE INDIAN MUTINY

I.—*The Siege of Delhi*

THOUGH the Sepoy Mutiny took place scarcely thirty years ago, it seems almost to belong to ancient history ; and it is possible, I think, to treat it with some degree of impartiality and coolness of judgment. Few will now contend, I suppose, that it was anything else than what I have called it, a Sepoy Mutiny,—a mutiny of the Sepoy army, distinguished from a revolt of the Indian people,—a military movement which did not command the sympathies of the people except within a limited area. Recent circumstances have shown that the Hindu respects, if he do not love, his energetic European rulers ; acknowledges their even-handed justice ; and, on the whole, is fairly loyal towards a government which, if not sympathetic, is at least equitable, serene, and patient. It would have been impossible, had the Mutiny elicited the support of the great masses of the population, for the handful of Englishmen scattered over the vast area of India, to have held their ground. Happily, it was nothing more than the outbreak of a class ; of a portion of that native soldiery in whom our military authorities had placed so imprudent a confidence,

whom they had injudiciously pampered and petted into insubordination. And it so befell that, at a very critical juncture, influences of a most unfavourable character had been brought to bear upon these hireling warriors. The British army in India had been depleted by frequent draughts until it had become, in a numerical sense, exceptionally weak; while its feeble battalions were distributed over wide stretches of country without regard to strategical considerations or probabilities of internal commotion. Moreover, the disasters which so seriously involved the Allied armies in the Crimea had been exaggerated in the Bazaars of India, and had led the Sepoy to look upon the military power of England as a thing of the past. He began to fear that its white regiments being exhausted, the government would send its Sepoy battalions across that 'black water,' which the great majority of Hindus dream of with an undefinable dread.

Nor were these the only causes which operated to shake the loyalty of the Sepoy. His religious prejudices had been skilfully excited by ingenious rumours and insinuations that the British Government designed to defile his caste and destroy his religion; and that for this purpose the cartridges recently issued to them had been greased with the pork fat abhorred by the Mohammeden, and the cow fat detested by the Brahman. Without leaders, however, the Sepoys would never have developed their fanatical wrath into any dangerously active condition. But the annexation policy of Lord Dalhousie had alarmed the enmity of many of the Indian princes, some of whom it had deprived of their power, and others, of the privileges which they valued more than power. Especially had the last confiscation of territory, of the fair and fertile province of Oudh, given rise to a widespread feeling of insecurity, while it had naturally enough awakened a strong sentiment of hostility among the Oudh nobles, or *talookdars*, who had been attacked in their most cherished interests. Thus it happened that the Sepoys,

while hesitating on the threshold of rebellion, were provided with leaders, who quickly carried them across it.

The British authorities, contentedly ignorant of the real feelings of the millions over whom they ruled, failed to take any of those measures which might have repressed this rapidly increasing disaffection. Fortunately, it is less true now than it was a quarter of a century ago that we know so little of what is stirring in the depths of Indian society—we dwell so much apart from the people—we see so little of them except in their external and superficial aspects—that the most dangerous conspiracies may spring into life under the very shadow of our bungalows, without our detection of a single unpleasant symptom. ‘Still less can we note that quiet under current of hostility which is continually flowing on without any immediate or definite object. . . . But it does not the less exist because we are ignorant of the form which it assumes or the point from which it springs.’ It is authoritatively held by men whose competency to judge can hardly be disputed that the men who corrupted the Indian Sepoys and led them into rebellion, were either the agents of some of the old princely houses which we had destroyed, or members of old baronial families which we had reduced to poverty and shame, or the emissaries of Brahmanical societies whose precepts we were turning into folly, or mere visionaries and enthusiasts, stimulated by their own heated fanatics to proclaim the coming of a new prophet, or a fresh avatar of the Deity, and the consequent downfall of Christian power in the East. It is open to us to doubt, however, whether the religious element had any important share in the outbreak, and, unquestionably, it never assumed a crusading character. But, at the same time, there is abundant evidence that immediately prior to the Sepoy Mutiny, the agents of disaffection appeared in our military stations and cantonments under the guise of passing travellers, hawkers, religious mendicants, or itinerant puppet-showmen,—sowing the seed of sedition

in a soil well fitted to receive and nourish it until the time came when it could break forth into 'a terrible harvest of rebellion.'

It was in the early part of 1857 that the military authorities took steps to furnish the native Indian regiments with a new rifled musket, in place of the venerable 'Brown Bess' with which they had hitherto been armed. Unfortunately, the new weapon could not be loaded unless the cartridge was previously lubricated or greased. In spite of the scrupulous reticence of the Government this circumstance became known to the superstitious soldiery. It chanced one day in January, that a low-caste Lascar meeting a high-caste Sepoy in the cantonment at Dum-Dum, asked him for a drink of water from his kotah. The Brahman objected on the score of caste; whereupon the Lascar answered him that caste went for nothing; that high-caste and low-caste would soon be just the same, since cartridges smeared with beef-fat and hog's lard were being made for the Sepoys at the depots, and, before long, would be distributed to the whole army.

The Brahman related this story to his comrades, and, with the wonderful rapidity which marks the secret dissemination of news in India, it spread from station to station until every Sepoy in Bengal was familiar with it. We need not dwell upon the horror and indignation it excited, for to the English reader it must always seem incredible; but overt proof of the strength of passion aroused was soon afforded at Barrackpore, a military station only six miles from Calcutta, where, night after night, the sky reddened with incendiary flames. At Berhampore the native regiment mutinied; but, by a prompt display of energy, was summarily reduced to obedience. From point to point flowed the wave of insubordination, until the extent of the area it covered alarmed the Government, which ordered an inquiry into its causes to be instituted. These

having been ascertained, immediate steps were taken to counteract the evil that had been wrought; and stringent orders were issued that no cartridges should be given out which were not free from grease, and that the Sepoys were to be allowed to apply with their own hands such lubricating mixtures as might be agreeable to them. It was reasonably supposed that they would gladly and gratefully recognize the anxiety of the Government to respect their religious scruples; but the mischief had been done—the lie had gone abroad, and had accomplished all that its inventors had designed and hoped for. Not, indeed, that of itself the greased cartridge story would have proved of much importance, but it was the spark that at a critical moment fell upon a vast mass of inflammable material. The mine had long been ready for explosion, and the greased cartridge fired the train.

The explosion took place on the 10th of May at the great military station of Meerut. The 3rd Native Cavalry broke into sudden, but we may be sure, not unpremeditated revolt; and its example was immediately followed by the two infantry regiments (the 11th and the 20th) then in cantonments. With musket, bayonet, and sabre, the infuriated wretches fell upon the Europeans—officers, soldiers, and civilians indiscriminately—and slew them in cold blood. At this time a large European detachment lay at Meerut; and had it been handled promptly and energetically by General Hewit, the chief in command, the mutineers might have been righteously punished, even if the insurrection had not been crushed in its birth throes. But Hewit appears to have been panic stricken. During the terrible night of the 10th and 11th of May, the rebels set fire to the European quarters, and massacred innocent women and children. Still the English commander made no sign, nor did he attempt to overtake or intercept them, when, 2000 strong, they marched out on their way to Delhi. This inexplicable, this

criminal inactivity must be regarded as the parent of most of the disasters which fill so dark a page in the history of our Anglo-Indian empire.

Early on the morning of the 12th the rebels arrived at Delhi, where, gathering tumultuously beneath the old King's palace-windows, they loudly demanded admission, and called upon him to help them, proclaiming that they had killed the English at Meerut, and had come to fight for 'the faith.' The Sepoy regiments of the ancient city at once adopted their cause and their cry, and, falling upon the undefended Europeans, revelled in an orgie of blood and rapine. So furious was their temper that the King fell into a panic of alarm for his own safety. With reeking swords in their hands, the murderers rushed from place to place, boasting of their hellish deeds, and calling upon others to follow their example. The corridors and court-yards of the palace swarmed with the mutineers of the Third Cavalry and the Thirty-eighth; while with this dangerous crowd mingled the Meerut infantry regiments and an excited Mohammedan rabble, breathing vengeance against 'the infidels.' The troopers stabled their horses in the palace-courts. The infantry, weary with the long night march, converted the audience-hall into a barrack, and littered down on the floor. Guards were posted all about the precincts of the palace, which indeed was wholly in military occupation.

The cowardice or supineness that had disgraced the British name at Meerut happily found no counterpart at Delhi. As soon as the explosive force of the insurrection could be estimated, and it was seen that Delhi was practically in the hands of the rebels, Lieutenants Willoughby and Forrester blew up the great Delhi magazine, to prevent its vast military stores from falling into their possession. The surviving Europeans then saved themselves by flight, and the Sepoys placed the aged and infirm King of Delhi on the

throne from which he had been deposed, and exultantly announced that the British *raj* in India was at an end.

The true proportions of the crisis, and its probable consequences, were fully appreciated by Lord Canning and by two of the most experienced of his lieutenants, the brothers Lawrence, Sir Henry and Sir John, of whom the former was at the head of the administration in Oudh, the latter Chief Commissioner in the Punjab. They agreed upon the supreme importance of recapturing Delhi, which, as the sacred city and capital of the old Mogul Empire, enjoyed a special prestige, and would naturally become the headquarters and centre of the insurrectionary movement, imparting a quasi-national character to what was in its inception a military revolt. Its recapture would, it was believed, deprive the enterprise of its vitality; and in a striking manner assert before all India the invincibility of the British power.

In this view, however, the Honourable George Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, did not coincide. He was a man of fair intelligence and entire devotedness to duty; but without military experience or the capacity for dealing with great emergencies. Not until the danger had come upon us did he discover the unpreparedness of the various military departments; and then, perceiving the inadequacy of the means at his disposal, he shrank from the hazard of the projected attack upon Delhi. 'Our small European force,' he wrote, 'is, in my opinion, insufficient for the purpose. The walls could, of course, be battered down with heavy guns. The entrance might be opened, and little resistance offered. But so few men in a great city, with such narrow streets, an immense armed population, who know every turn and corner of them, would, it appears to me, be in a very dangerous position; and if six or seven hundred were disabled, what would remain? Could we hold it with the whole country armed against us? Could we either stay in or out of it? My own view of the state of things now is,

that by carefully collecting our resources, having got rid of the bad materials which we cannot trust, and having supplied their places with others of a better sort, it would not be very long before we could proceed without a chance of failure, in whatever direction we might please.' The ineptitude of these remarks is singular ; it is painfully evident that their writer did not understand the position of the British in India, though he commanded the British army.

Lord Canning, however, supported by Sir John Lawrence, did not cease to urge upon his reluctant colleague the necessity of immediate action, and to explain the momentous political considerations involved in the recapture of Delhi. At last he was convinced or over-ruled ; and made active preparations for the undertaking which he still believed to be impossible. Valuable assistance was lent to him by Sir John Lawrence, who did not hesitate to strip the Punjab of nearly all its European troops, while making ready to follow them up with reinforcements of Sikh battalions. Anson, with the rear-guard of his little army, marched from Umballa on the 25th of May ; but the next day, literally broken down by the burden of a responsibility for which he was unfitted, he was seized with cholera, of which, in a few hours, the result was fatal. His successor, Sir Harry Barnard, pushed forward with laudable energy, leaving orders for a siege-train to be hurried to the scene of action. On the 7th of June he reached Alipur, where he was joined by a brigade from Meerut, under Colonel (afterwards Sir Archdale) Wilson, who on his march had fought two engagements with the rebels, and beaten them soundly ; and the siege-train having arrived, he advanced, on the 8th, to Budli-ka-Serai, about six miles from the city of the Mogul, where the Sepoys were posted in force.

On reconnoitring the enemy's position, he found that it had been well chosen for defensive purposes, the infantry being sheltered from an attacking fire by walled gardens and groups of old houses. Numbers were against him, but

Barnard did not hesitate. After a brisk cannonade his infantry charged the enemy's batteries, capturing the guns, and bayoneting the gunners. A vigorous blow against the left wing of the Sepoys completely demoralised them ; and their rear being at the same time assailed by our cavalry and horse artillery, they broke in the wildest disorder and took to flight, abandoning all their guns, stores, and baggage.

Just one month from the portentous outbreak at Meerut, the British troops crowned the celebrated Ridge, before Delhi, which had previously been occupied by the British cantonments. . . . A position not less remarkable for its picturesque character than for its strategical advantages. From this elevated point the spectator sees, as in a map, the great city, with shining mosque and slender minaret, laid out beneath his feet ; one side resting upon the river Jumna,—the other, with massive red walls, projecting towards himself. A beautiful picture is composed by the quaintly charming suburbs, with their stately houses, their blooming gardens, and their leafy groves ; while the sunlight flashes with a thousand golden reflections from the mirror-like waves of the ample river. From a military point of view, the position was exceptionally advantageous. It commanded the principal roads leading to the city and the neighbouring canals, one of which, the Nujufgurh, furnished a copious supply of water. On the left, the rocky ridge descended to the Jumna, some three or four miles distant from the city ; on the right it approached within a thousand yards of the Cabul gate. It extended about two miles longitudinally, and averaged from fifty to sixty feet in height. To the left and in the centre it was covered with the ruins of old houses, which concealed the British tents from the Sepoy defenders of the city. On the extreme right was situated a large building known as Hindu Rao's house ; and between this and the extreme left were situated, at intervals, the flagstaff tower, a dilapidated mosque, and the observatory.

All four posts were strongly garrisoned. We may add that, on the right, below the ridge, lay the Subzu-munder, or vegetable-market; nearer at hand rose the Mound, on which our soldiers afterwards erected a strong battery. Owing to the smallness of their numbers, the British could not push their approaches very near the walls; and, indeed, as a matter of fact, the nearest battery was at least 1500 yards distant.

As for the fortifications of the city, the walls, which were of exceptional solidity, and defended by numerous bastions, as well as by a dry ditch, twenty-eight feet broad and twenty deep, extended over a circuit of seven miles, and averaged twenty-four feet in height. Each of its ten gates was surmounted by towers: the three against which the British mainly directed their attack were the Kashmir, the Moree, and the Cabul. The fort of Selimghur was a strong outwork, the guns of which commanded the river-approach; and the mass of buildings enclosed within the palace-area afforded great facilities for defence. This defence was undertaken by about 30,000 Sepoys, trained soldiers, accustomed to the European discipline, and abundantly supplied with arms, ordnance, ammunition, and provisions.

On the other hand, Sir Harry Barnard's force, in June 1857, numbered only 3000 British troops, besides the Punjab Guides corps, a battalion of Goorkhas, and two native regiments, whose fidelity was dubious. His artillery equipment consisted of twenty-two field guns, and a weak siege-train. Thus the odds were heavily against him; but he had a great work to do, and with all his energy prepared to do it. But he retained at the same time his prudence and self-control; and when it was suggested to him that the city might be carried by a *coup de main*, he had the firmness to refuse his consent. He saw that even if he succeeded in storming Delhi, it would involve a loss of life that would incapacitate his little army from holding it.

The truth was, that while nominally besieging Delhi he was himself besieged ; pertinacious attacks upon his position being made daily by superior numbers, against which no other troops but the British could have held their own. ' They had no proper rest by night,' says Mr Rotton, ' the smallness of the force requiring so many for the ordinary pickets, and admitting scarcely of any relief for any length of time together, while those who were in camp often slept under arms, not knowing the moment when their services might be urgently required. At first, it was literally nothing but fighting by day, and watching and expecting to renew the conflict by night, and in the discharge of both duties you could not fail, from frequent visits to the pickets, to recognize the same hands everlastingly employed in the same work.'

On the 12th of June the enemy attacked the left of the British position, but were swiftly repulsed. On the 13th and 15th they failed in furious efforts to capture Hindu Rao's house. Day after day our small army was kept on the alert, sometimes assuming the offensive, as on the 17th, when they captured and destroyed a Sepoy battery, the fire of which had proved annoying, but generally confining themselves to defensive operations. On the 19th the rebels crept round the Subzu-munder, and were fain to have surprised the British rear, but were discovered and driven back after some heavy fighting. They repeated the attempt in greater force on the 23rd of June—the centenary of Plassy—and a vehement struggle prolonged until night-fall, strained to the uttermost the endurance and resolution of Sir Harry Barnard's little band of fighting men. But as the sun went down, the ardour of the enemy also sank ; at sunset they confessed their defeat, and as the British advanced and occupied the Subzu-munder, fell back within the walls of the city. After the long day of desperate fighting beneath a blazing sky, our men were too spent to charge the guns or pursue the retreating foe. They had

won the victory, but it was evident that a few more such victories would convert their camp into a cemetery; and the rebels had been defeated, but then it was clear that a few more such defeats would give them all they hoped for.

Towards the end of the month, the eagerly-expected reinforcements began to arrive in the British camp. Both Europeans and Sikhs streamed down from the Punjab; and with their battalions came Brigadier (afterwards Sir Neville) Chamberlain and Colonel Baird Smith,—two skilful and daring officers, who in themselves were equal to a brigade. Just at this moment of happier promise died gallant Sir Harry Barnard. Like his predecessor he fell a victim to cholera. His constitution, enfeebled by prolonged anxiety and continuous labour, was unable to withstand the violence of the disease, and he expired, after a few hours' illness, on the 5th of July. General Reid succeeded to the command, but was compelled by ill health to transfer it on the 17th to Brigadier Archdale Wilson, an officer who had seen much service and earned considerable distinction. But for the responsibilities of his new position he was hardly strong enough, and on more than one occasion he hesitated, when hesitation was most injurious.

The incessant activity of the enemy demanded a corresponding watchfulness on the part of the British, who, however, preserved their cheerfulness of spirit, and at no time doubted the issue of the contention. With a shout of enthusiasm they welcomed, on the 7th of August, that brilliant warrior, Brigadier Nicholson, who came into camp at the head of a fine force of 2500 Europeans and Sikhs. The presence of this chivalrous Paladin—firm and gallant as the Sir Arthegal of Spenser's epic—kindled in the army a strenuous desire to try conclusions with the rebels; but before any decisive effort could be made to carry the city, an important duty devolved upon the young commander. A heavy siege-train was on its way from Ferozepur. Spies

reported that the enemy had despatched a strong force to intercept it. To baffle them in their attempt, Nicholson with his column left the camp early on the morning of the 25th of August, and marched, in a deluge of rain, and along roads little better than swamps, towards Nujufgurh. On coming up with the rebels he found that their front was covered by a couple of villages and a *serai*: without hesitation he pushed forward his English troops against the *serai*, while with his Sikh battalions he attacked the villages.

The resistance was resolute, the conflict desperate. The heroism which was displayed by our people was emulated by the enemy. The Sepoys fought well, and sold their lives dearly. There was a sanguinary hand-to-hand encounter. Many of the gunners and the drivers were bayoneted or cut down in the battery, and those who escaped limbered up and made, in hot haste, for the bridge crossing the Nujufgurh Canal. But the attacking party pressed closely upon them. The swampy state of the ground was fatal to the retreat. The leading gun stuck fast in the morass, and impeded the advance of those in the rear. Then our pursuing force fell upon them, and before they had made good their retreat captured thirteen guns and killed eight hundred of their fighting men.

Flushed with this latest victory, Nicholson returned to the camp before Delhi; and his eager persistency induced General Wilson to hazard an attack upon the city. Batteries were hastily erected; and a tremendous fire opened against the walls in order to effect a practicable breach through which the storming columns might enter. The points selected were the Moree, Kashmir, and Water Bastions; and against them was hurled an incessant storm of shot and shell. On the 13th, the artillery having done its work, the attacking force was drawn up in four columns and a reserve. The first column, 1000 strong, led by the intrepid Nicholson, was ordered to storm the breach near the

Kashmir Bastion; the second, 850 strong, under Brigadier Jones, the breach in the Water Bastion; the third, 950 strong, under Colonel Campbell, the Kashmir Gate, after it had been blown open by the engineers; while the fourth, 860 strong, under Major Charles Reid, was directed to sweep clear the suburbs of Paharanpore and Kishengunje, and then to break into the city by the Lahore Gate. The advance of the storming columns was covered by 200 riflemen, under Lieutenant-Colonel Jones. The reserve column, under Brigadier Longfield, numbered 1300 men; so that the whole force destined to attempt the capture of a great city, garrisoned by 30,000 trained soldiers, did not exceed 5160 men.

The day fixed for the assault was the 14th of September, and before morning broke, the columns were under arms, and 'eager for the fray.'

Says the historian of the Mutiny:—

'The general design of the attack was this: the infantry divided into four columns, and a column of reserve, and guided by Engineer officers, were to cross the ditch at different points by the aid of scaling ladders, to clear the outer defences of the city, taking possession of all bastions, guns, and gateways, and establishing defensible posts. This having been accomplished, it was left to the discretion of commanding officers, under the general direction of Nicholson, to determine whether, dependent upon the circumstances of the moment, and the resistance of force, it would be advisable to direct the columns to clear the streets of the city in their front and vicinity, or to wait for the arrival of artillery to aid them. The roads to the palace and Selinghur having been rendered practicable, a vigorous bombardment of those places was to be undertaken with the least possible delay, every available mortar being conveyed into the city and placed in the magazine or other suitable positions. . . . It was the general conception that all this might be accomplished, and the person of the King secured, within three or

four days from the time of our first delivery of the assault.'

Suddenly the British batteries fell into silence, the bugles sounded the advance, and with a ringing cheer the fighting-men went forward to their terrible work. In crossing the ditch they suffered severely from the rebel musketry; but not for one moment did it check their solid, steady advance. Nicholson's column was divided into two sections, the Bengal Fusiliers, led by himself, and the Queen's 75th, led by Colonel Herbert. In his grand impatience, Nicholson was the first to mount the wall. Then, with a rapid rush and a mighty cheer, the British stormed the breach, and driving back the raging Sepoys with their levelled steel, seized upon and firmly held the main guard.

Not less eager in advance, nor less successful in action, was the second column. They swiftly carried the breach in the Water Bastion, killing and wounding as they went; and, bounding across the open area, inclined to the right until they got into touch with Nicholson's men. Thence they swept onward, fighting all the way, to the Moree Bastion; cleared it in a few minutes of its Sepoy defenders, and advanced to the Cabul gate, from the summit of which soon waved the British flag.

Through the darkened air now rang the sharp shrill call of the bugle; the different corps gathered together, and the warriors of England shook hands with one another, marvelling not a little that through such a fiery furnace any should have passed unhurt. They could not look at the gaps in their ranks without a feeling of sorrow; but their spirits rose again when they remembered that their dead comrades had fallen in the faithful discharge of their duty, and in vindication of the majesty of England.

Meanwhile, Nicholson had entered the city, and silenced the fire of the enemy between the Kashmir and Moree Bastions. On reaching the Cabul gate he took command of the troops, and issued his orders for their further move-

ments. Returning to the first column, he found it exposed to harassing discharges of musketry from the Lahore gate, which he decided therefore to attack immediately, though it could be approached only through a narrow street or lane, swept by the enemy's rifles. As the column advanced, it sustained such severe loss that for a moment it lost its steadiness; but Nicholson galloped forward to reassure it, drawing his tall figure to its full height, and waving his sword above his head. At his call the soldiers again sprang forward, cheering heartily; but in the same moment a rifle bullet struck him in the chest. As he fell from his horse, a couple of Fusiliers caught him in their arms, and tenderly conveyed him to the hospital on the Ridge, where the surgeons, on examining the wound, pronounced it mortal.*

We must follow now the fortunes of the third column, on which devolved the duty of storming the Kashmir Gate. With brisk and steady step the men advanced, preceded by a party of engineers, under Lieutenants Home and Salkeld, and accompanied by twenty-four native sappers and miners, carrying bags of gunpowder, in order to blow in the Kashmir Gate. Their proceedings are thus described by Colonel Baird Smith: 'The party advanced at the double towards the Kashmir Gate, Lieutenant Home, with Sergeants Smith and Carmichael, and Havildar Mahore, with all the sappers, leading and carrying the powder bags, followed by Lieutenant Salkeld and a portion of the remainder of the party. The advanced party reached the gateway unhurt, and found that part of the drawbridge had been destroyed, but passing along the precarious footway supplied by the remaining beams, they proceeded to lodge their powder bags against the gate. The wicket was open, and through it the enemy kept up a heavy fire upon them. Sergeant Carmichael was killed while laying his powder bag, Havildar Mahore being at the same time

* Nicholson lingered for a few days, and expired on the 23rd.

wounded. The powder being laid, the advanced party slipped down into the ditch, to allow the firing party, under Lieutenant Salkeld, to perform its duty. While endeavouring to fire the charge, Lieutenant Salkeld was shot through the arm and leg, and handed over the slow match to Corporal Burgess, who fell mortally wounded just as he had accomplished the onerous duty. Havildar Tellah Sing, of the Sikhs, was wounded, and Ramlell, Sepoy of the same corps, was killed during this part of the operation. The demolition being most successful, Lieutenant Home, happily not wounded, caused the bugler to sound the regimental call of the 52nd, as the signal for the advancing columns. Fearing that, amid the noise of the assault, the sounds might not be heard, he had the call repeated three times, when the troops advanced and carried the gateway with complete success. I feel certain that a simple statement of this elevated and glorious deed will suffice to stamp it as one of the noblest on record in military history.'

Having swept the rebels from the gate, the third column, supported by the reserve, pushed forward into the imperial city, every inch of the ground being fiercely contested, until it gained its appointed position near St James's Church. The fourth column, Major Reid's, had advanced to Kishengunje; but deprived of its gallant commander, who was shot in the head, it yielded before the formidable attack of the enemy, and was driven back in confusion. The rebels were improving this advantage, and preparing to attack the left of the British camp, when Hope Grant, swiftly detecting the danger, led his cavalry to the charge, and so furiously, that the Sepoys were literally ridden down, and abandoned their positions, leaving their guns in our hands.

The day was rapidly waning, and as the British troops were weary with their long contention against such formidable odds, their commanders were called upon to decide what was next to be done. The heavy loss, 273 killed and

872 wounded, attested the desperate character of the work in which they had been engaged. It is not surprising that the general was alarmed by this colossal sacrifice, and when with his staff, he rode down to the city, and saw all around him the heaps of dead and dying, his first thought was, that the columns must be withdrawn to the ridge, though this was to give up all, or nearly all, that had been gained at such heavy cost. Enquiring of Colonel Baird Smith, however, if it were possible for them to hold the positions they had taken, that dashing officer bluntly replied, 'They *must* do so;' and General Wilson offered no further objection. Meanwhile, feverish with excitement, and suffering from thirst, the men had fallen on the abundant supplies of intoxicating liquor which the city contained, until their commanders began to fear lest, disabled by excess, they should be attacked and overwhelmed by the still formidable army. The general gave immediate orders for the destruction of the dangerous liquors; and gallons of wine, spirits, and beer were poured into the gutters. This prudent measure probably saved the army from a fatal reverse. By the morning order was restored; the advance was resumed, the magazine carried, and the position at Kishengünje so far turned that the rebels voluntarily abandoned it as untenable.

'During the 17th and 18th,' says General Wilson, 'we continued to take up advanced posts in the face of considerable opposition on the part of the rebels, and not without loss to ourselves, three officers being killed, and a number of men killed and wounded. On the evening of the 19th, the Burem Bastion, which had given us considerable annoyance, was surprised and captured. On the morning of the 20th, our troops pushed on and occupied the Lahore Gate, from which an unopposed advance was made on the other bastions and gateways, until the whole of the defences of the city were in our hands. From the time of our entering the city, an uninterrupted and vigorous fire from our guns

and mortars was kept up on the palace, Jumma Musjid, and other important posts in possession of the rebels ; and as we took up our various positions in advance, our light guns and mortars were brought forward, and used with effect in the streets and houses in their neighbourhood. The result of this heavy and unceasing bombardment, and of the steady and persevering advance of our troops, has been the evacuation of the palace by the King, the entire desertion of the city by the inhabitants, and the precipitate flight of the rebel troops—who, abandoning their camp property, many of their sick and wounded, and the greater part of their field artillery, have fled in utter disorganisation—some 4000 or 5000 across the bridge of boats into the Doab, the remainder down the right banks of the Jumna. The gates of the palace having been blown in, it was occupied by our troops about noon on the 20th, and my head-quarters established in it the same day.'

Major Hodson, of Hodson's horse, a cavalry officer of daring temper and iron will, was despatched with fifty troopers, to secure the person of the King, who was known to have taken refuge within the precincts of the vast buildings bearing the general name of Humayoun's Tomb. There the white-haired, weak old man—doubly weak, in mind as well as in body—who represented the once famous dynasty of Timour and Aureng Zebe—surrendered to the English officer, and with his Queen, Zinat Makal, and their son, Jumma Bukht, was removed to Delhi, and placed in charge of the principal civil authority. On the following day Hodson went in search of the Shahzadahs, two of the King's sons and a grandson, who still lay at Humayoun's Tomb. They made no attempt at resistance, asking only that their lives might be spared ; and when Hodson sternly refused to make any conditions, they came out in covered bullock-carts, and were sent on to Delhi, guarded by a double line of horsemen. Hodson delayed a few minutes with consummate audacity to command the five or six

thousand natives assembled in or around the Tomb, to lay down their arms, and then galloped forward to overtake his squadron. A disorderly crowd pressed them very closely, he apprehended that a rescue was in contemplation; and in the belief that it was a just punishment for the cruelties committed by them or in their name, resolved on slaying his prisoners. The wretched prisoners were compelled to quit their carts, and strip themselves to their under garments. With fear and trembling they obeyed, and were afterwards ordered back to their carts. Then Hodson snatched a carbine from one of his sowars, and with cold-blooded deliberation put his captives to death. They merited their fate, for they had sanctioned and even witnessed the massacre of women and children; but one could wish it had befallen them after fair trial and by legal sentence. It cannot but be regretted that a British officer should have taken on himself the executioner's part; and that one of the most glorious episodes in our military history should have been closed with this scene of blood.

The capture of Delhi was very welcome to Lord Canning who had watched the slow progress of the siege with profound anxiety. His feeling of exultation finds expression in the Proclamation which announced it:—'Delhi, the focus of the treason and revolt which for four months have harassed Hindustan, and the stronghold in which the mutinous army of Bengal has sought to concentrate its power, has been wrested from the rebels. The King is a prisoner in the palace. The head-quarters of Major-General Wilson are established in the Dewani Khan. A strong column is in pursuit of the fugitives. Whatever may be the motives and passions by which the mutinous soldiery, and those who are leagued with them, have been instigated to faithlessness, rebellion, and crimes at which the heart sickens, it is certain that they have found encouragement in the delusive belief that India was weakly guarded by England, and that before the Government could gather its

strength against them, their ends would be gained. They are now undeceived. Before a single soldier of the many thousands who are hastening from England to uphold the supremacy of the British power has set foot on these shores, the rebel force where it was strongest and most united, and where it had the command of unbounded military appliances, has been destroyed or scattered, by an army collected within the limits of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab alone. The work has been done before the support of those battalions which have been collected in Bengal, from the forces of the Queen in China, and in Her Majesty's eastern colonies, could reach Major-General Wilson's army, and it is by the courage and endurance of that gallant army alone—by the skill, sound judgment, and steady resolution of its brave commander—and by the aid of some native chiefs, true to their allegiance, that, under the blessing of God, the head of rebellion has been crushed, and the cause of loyalty, humanity, and rightful authority vindicated.'

If in the North-West the rebellion had been crushed, in other parts of India, and notably in Oudh, it continued its baneful progress, and Lord Canning had still strong cause for the grave anxiety which he concealed beneath his dignified composure of mein. To Oudh we must now direct the reader's attention, for there were perpetrated the foulest of all the atrocities which disgraced the Sepoy Mutiny.

On the 7th of May, the 7th Oudh Irregular Cavalry, stationed about seven miles from the Lucknow cantonments, refused, when ordered, to bite the obnoxious cartridge. The Government had formally dispensed with this regulation and its enforcement was due to some inexplicable blunder. But the regiment, which had formerly been in the King of Oudh's service, was not influenced only by religious scruples; the mutinous spirits which guided it contemplated rebellion, and they wrote to the 48th native infantry, then stationed at Lucknow:—'We are ready to

obey the directions of our brothers of the 48th in the matter of cartridges, and to resist, either actively or passively.' The administration of Oudh, however, was then in the hands of Sir Henry Lawrence, a man of wide experience, thorough knowledge of the native character, great resolution, and inflexible will. As soon as intelligence was conveyed to him of the disaffected attitude of the Oudh regiment, he collected his forces, and set out with a wing of Her Majesty's 32nd, a field battery, and some detachments of native cavalry and infantry. At his approach the mutineers showed signs of alarm, and endeavoured to propitiate the Chief Commissioner by giving up two of the ringleaders and offering to surrender forty more. Sir Henry ordered them to form into line, and having disposed his European infantry so as to overawe them, compelled them to give up their arms, and dismissed the principal offenders from the Company's service. Returning to Lucknow, he made instant preparations to meet the storm which his prescient eye detected as imminent. Ably supported by Mr Gubbins and Captain Fletcher Hayes, he adopted energetic measures for the defence of the European colony, isolated among a population whom he knew to be unfriendly. 'He got in all the treasure from the city and stations, bought up and stored grain and supplies of every kind, bought up all the supplies of the European shopkeepers: got the mortars and guns to the Residency, got in the powder and small ammunition, all the shot and shell, and the heavy guns; had pits dug for the powder and grain, arranged for water supply, strengthened the Residency, had outworks formed, and cleared away all obstructions close up to the Residency,' so that, when the mutiny spread to Lucknow, and the Sepoys revolted, and the whole population of the city and the province—for in Oudh the civil population made common cause with the rebels—ran against us, the little garrison was amply supplied with provisions, ammunition, and resources of every kind.

As the month of June wore on, it became painfully

evident to the English in Lucknow that the burden of his responsibilities was weighing heavily on their noble chief, who, from the very beginning of his administration in Oudh, had suffered from infirm health. Unwilling to spare himself when he knew effort to be so urgently needed, always devoted to his duty, he daily grew more feeble; and fully conscious of his uncertain tenure of life, he provided for possible contingencies by appointing Major Banks to succeed him in the chief commissionership, and Colonel Inglis in the command of the garrison. A brief rest temporarily recruited him; and on the 30th of June he took command of a military force intended to disperse a large body of the enemy who had assembled at Chinhut, about twelve miles from the capital. By some misadventure the strength of the enemy had been under-estimated; and Lawrence took with him only 700 men, half of whom were natives. On arriving in front of the Sepoys' position, he discovered that the plain between Ishmailganj and Chinhut was one 'moving mass of men.' Deserted by his native gunners, and hopelessly outnumbered, he had no alternative but to retreat; and abandoning his guns and wounded, he fell back hastily upon Lucknow, closely pursued by the exulting enemy. The disaster was of serious consequence; for a hundred and nineteen of his little body of British soldiers had been struck down by the tropical sun or the enemy's destructive fire.

Pouring into the city, the rebels speedily surrounded the Residency and the Muchee-Bhowan, the British positions, occupying all the houses that commanded them, and maintaining a tremendous fire of musketry. Under cover of the midnight darkness, the Muchee-Bhowan was successfully evacuated, and the European force concentrated in the Residency, the fort being at the same time blown up, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. This took place on the 1st of July. On the following day the beleaguered garrison were deprived of their noble leader. The

upper room which he occupied in the Residency was exposed to a tremendous hurricane of shot and shell. On the 1st of July a shell burst within it, and the officers about Sir Henry endeavoured to persuade him to retire to a more sheltered part of the building. Unfortunately, from a belief that it was the best spot from which he could superintend the defence, he refused to move. How mistaken was this refusal became only too apparent on the morrow, when a shell, exploding by the side of his couch, shattered his thigh.

That the wound was mortal Sir Henry felt at once, and of his medical attendant, Dr Fayrer, he inquired calmly, how long he had to live. The answer was, 'About three days.' He made ready at once for death, receiving Holy Communion, and addressing a few parting words of affectionate counsel to those in attendance upon him. The imperative need of defending the Residency to the last, and of never capitulating, he urged upon his officers again and yet again. 'Let every man die at his post,' he cried, but never make terms! God help the poor women and children!' He told the chaplain that he wished to be buried very privately—'without any fuss—buried in the same grave with any of the garrison who might die about the same time. And in a low voice he repeated the words he intended for his epitaph: 'Here lies Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May God have mercy upon him!'

His sufferings were severe, but he had many intervals of rest; and weak as he was, he lingered on until the beginning of the second day, when, at about eight o'clock in the morning, he gently passed away (July 4). That same evening he was buried in his soldier's grave—hastily dug under a heavy fire of shot and shell—leaving behind him a name and memory which Englishmen will never cease to honour.*

* Sir Henry Lawrence's name is happily commemorated by the noble Institution which he founded for the education and training of the children of European soldiers serving in India.

Leaving Lucknow in the hands of the rebels, with its small English colony and garrison, shut up in the beleaguered Residency, we must direct the reader's attention to Cawnpore, the scene of one of the most tragical episodes of the Mutiny.

At the outbreak of the rebellion, the officer in command of the Cawnpore division was Major General Sir Hugh Wheeler, a veteran of seventy-five, who spoke the language of the Sepoys like themselves, and placed in them the profoundest confidence. This extreme faith in their loyalty and discipline was shaken, however, on the 20th of May, when he could no longer shut his eyes to the signs of disaffection among them, which less prejudiced persons had observed before; and, as a measure of safety, he telegraphed to Lucknow for immediate reinforcements of European troops. Unfortunately, at the same time, he invited the assistance of the Maharaja of Bithoor, better known as the Nana,—his real name was Sirik Dhundu Punth*—whose hatred of the British Government and enormous ambition had induced him to favour secretly the designs of the Sepoys, intending to turn them to his own advantage. The spider joyfully responded to the invitation of the short-sighted fly; and despatched to Cawnpore, on the 22nd, a couple of guns, and three hundred cavalry and infantry.

Some of the Europeans at Cawnpore had, however, a juster appreciation than Wheeler of the subtleties of the Nana's character; and, under their urgent pressure, General Wheeler finally undertook to provide a defensive position. Around the buildings which composed the old Military Hospital he raised a mud wall, four feet high; and armed it with half a score of guns. A supply of provisions was also

* He was the adopted son of the last of the Peishwas, who had obtained by treaty a pension of £90,000 a year; and his grievance against the Government was their refusal to continue the pension to him on the Peishwa's decease.

brought together. While the works were in progress, Azimoolah, the Nana's confidential and unscrupulous agent and emissary, inquired of a British officer: 'What do you call that place you are making in the plain?' 'I am sure I don't know,' said the officer. 'It should be called,' Azimoolah sarcastically remarked, 'The Fort of Despair.' 'No, no,' exclaimed the Englishman, 'we will call it the Fort of Victory'—a proposal received by Azimoolah, with an air of incredulous assent.'

During the last days of May the symptoms of insubordination and disaffection grew so marked that the Europeans at Cawnpore felt that they sat, so to speak, on the brink of a volcano. Yet, with singular want of judgment, Sir Hugh Wheeler, hearing that some alarm prevailed at Lucknow, despatched thither, on the 3rd of June, two officers and fifty men of the 84th regiment: thus, not only sending back the Lucknow reinforcement that had arrived during the previous week, but depriving himself of a portion of his own little garrison. On the following night occurred the outbreak. The 2nd Native Cavalry were the first to rise; their example was immediately followed by the 1st Native Infantry, and, after some hesitation, by the 53rd and 56th. The Nana now saw that he could no longer temporize. He placed himself at the head of the rebels, who saluted him as their Raja, and proceeded to invest the feeble asylum in which the Europeans of Cawnpore, soldiers and civilians, were prepared to sell their lives dearly. They were accompanied by some natives who had remained true to their flag; so that, in all, about one thousand souls were sheltered in the two single-storied barracks surrounded by Sir Hugh Wheeler's mud wall. Of those 460 were men; their wives and grown-up daughters numbered about 280, and their children at least as many. On inspection it was found that about 400 could bear arms; these were told off in companies under their respective officers; then a line of sentries was established, and arms and ammunition were

freely distributed. A manly and resolute purpose animated every member of Sir Hugh Wheeler's little force ; though, surrounded as they were by three battalions of highly trained Bengal Sepoys, a regiment of excellent calvary, and a detachment of artillery, the prospect before them was not very hopeful.

Having plundered the city and cantonment, and whetted their ferocious appetites by murdering all the defenceless Christian people on whom they could lay hands, the rebel Sepoys began their attack upon the British position. About noon, on the 6th of June, a round shot fell within their lines, and warned the defenders that the struggle had begun. The fire soon became furious, and, as the day declined, the enemy's guns discharged shot and shell with terrible rapidity and accuracy ; the grave defects of the site chosen by Sir Hugh Wheeler for the defence soon became lamentably conspicuous. The dragoons' old hospital was, indeed, entirely commanded by large substantial buildings, not more than three to eight hundred yards distant ; and those buildings afforded the assailants, whose numbers were daily increased by the disaffected and adventurous from all the surrounding country, at least as effective a protection as their rapidly improvised fortifications afforded the defenders. Showers of bullets rained from roof and window throughout the hours of daylight ; while even after dusk, troops of Sepoys hovered within pistol-shot, and made night hideous with their fierce yells and incessant volleys of musketry.

The historian of Cawnpore, Sir George Trevelyan, observes that the annals of warfare contain no episode so painful as the story of this deadly struggle. This may be an exaggeration ; but it must be admitted that the interest is profoundly tragic :—

'The sun,' he says, 'never before looked on such a sight as a crowd of women and children cooped within a small space, and exposed during twenty days and nights to the concentrated fire of thousands of muskets and a score of

heavy cannon. At first every projectile which struck the barracks was the signal for heart-rending shrieks and low wailing, more heart-rending yet ; but, ere long, time and habit taught them to suffer and to fear in silence. Before the third evening every door and window had been beaten in. Next went the screens, the piled-up furniture, and the internal partitions ; and soon shell and ball ranged at will through and through the naked rooms. Some ladies were slain outright by grape or round shot. Others were struck down by bullets. Many were crushed beneath falling brickwork, or mutilated by the splinters which flew from shattered sash and panel. Happy were they whose age and sex called them to the front of the battle, and dispensed them from the spectacle of this passive carnage. Better to hear more distinctly the crackle of the Sepoy musketry, and the groans of wounded wife and sister more faintly. If die they both must—such was the thought of more than one husband—it was well that duty bade them die apart.’

The usual horrors of a close siege were intensified by the heat of the Indian summer. Like a vast ball of fire blazed the midsummer sun ; like the breath of a furnace blew the midsummer breeze. At this season the strength and energy of Europeans are always greatly depressed ; and yet, at Cawnpore, they were called upon to bear such a strain as they had never before experienced ! It was borne in truly heroic fashion : not a man deserted his post ; not a man flinched from the exacting duties which the situation imposed upon him. The swarming hosts of enemies who raved and raged around their weak defences, never shook for a moment their brave patience. The only thing that had power to make their lips quiver or their cheeks pale, was the thought of what might happen to their wives and children if their stubborn resistance should at last be beaten down. The women were not unworthy of this filial or conjugal anxiety ; no heroine of romance or poetry, no Cornelia or Portia of the splendid days of ancient

Rome, ever exhibited a nobler patience—ever manifested a more magnificent courage. Mayhap, if it be allowable to particularise among so many who displayed the finest qualities of heroism, the palm should be awarded to Mrs Moore, true-hearted wife of Captain Moore, whose chivalry had made him the virtual commander of the British garrison. His warriors cherished for her a most sympathetic admiration, and fitted up for her use a little hut of bamboo, covered with canvas, in which she sat for hours while her husband was engaged on some enterprise of extraordinary peril. Others, perhaps, suffered even more keenly. Not a few endured the pangs of childbirth while shot and shell stormed fatally around them. Some saw their children waste slowly at their breast, others had them torn from their arms by the deadly bullets. Those who were not exhausted with fatigue, or enfeebled with illness, or engaged as nurses and attendants, assisted the soldiers in the work of defence—carrying ammunition, or loading muskets. The same spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty pervaded every member of the little European colony exposed to such dread straits in Cawnpore.

When the siege had lasted about a week, the garrison was visited with a severe disaster in the destruction, by fire, of the barrack, which, as the more comfortable of the two buildings, had been appropriated to the sick and wounded. On the eighth evening a live shell set fire to its thatched roof, and in a few minutes the whole building was a-blaze. The scene that ensued was terrible, for the helpless unfortunates in the hospital were in danger of being suffocated by smoke or burned to death. With persistent energy did their comrades labour to rescue them ; while the Sepoys, exulting in the terrible effects of their fire, poured incessant volleys of shot and shell upon the blazing pile, directed to their mark by the flames, which illuminated, with a lurid glow, the dark canopy of night. Two artillerymen perished; the rest were all saved. The destruction of the barrack

was, however, a very grave misadventure. Women and children, deprived of its shelter, were compelled, day after day, and night after night, to sleep on the bare ground, with no other covering than fragments of wine-chests and strips of canvas, which were soon destroyed by the enemy's fire. Worse still, all the hospital stores and surgical instruments were consumed or ruined, so that, thenceforth, nothing could be done to alleviate the sufferings of the sick or wounded.

The worst misfortunes that befell the little garrison were the growing scarcity of provisions and the decreasing supply of water. In numbers it was being rapidly reduced. Within the space of three short weeks, two hundred and fifty Europeans were interred in the well—just outside the ramparts—which served as a cemetery. 'The frequency of our casualties,' says Captain Thomson, 'may be understood by the history of one hour. Lieutenant Poole had come to the mainguard to see Armstrong, the Adjutant of the 53rd Native Infantry, who was unwell. While engaged in a conversation with the invalid, Poole was struck by a musket-ball in the thigh and fell to the ground. I put his arm upon my shoulder, and, holding him round the waist, endeavoured to hobble across the open to the barrack, in order that he might obtain the attention of the surgeons there. While thus employed, a ball hit me under the right shoulder-blade, and we fell to the ground together, and were picked up by some privates, who dragged us both back to the mainguard. While I was lying on the ground, woe-fully sick from the wound, Gilbert Box, of the 48th Native Infantry, came to condole with me, when a bullet pierced his shoulder-blade, causing a wound from which he died upon the termination of the siege.'

Here is another ghastly record:—

'Hillersden, the collector, who had negotiated the alliance with the Nana Sahib, fell a corpse at the foot of his young wife, with his entrails torn out by a round shot. A

few days afterwards she was relieved from the memories of her bereavement by a merciful fall of masonry, which killed her. The general's son and aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Wheeler, was lying wounded in one of the barrack-rooms, when, in the presence of his whole family, father, mother, and sisters, a round shot boomed into the apartment, and carried off the young soldier's head. Another round shot struck up splinters into Major Lindsay's face, gashing and blinding him. He lingered on in darkness and in agony for some days, attended by his wife, when death took him, and she soon followed. Colonel Williams, of the 56th, being disabled by a wound early in the siege, died of apoplexy from sunstroke, leaving his wife and daughters in the intrenchments. The former, shot in the face and frightfully disfigured, lay for some days, tended by her wounded daughter, until death came to the suffering widow's relief . . . Captain Holliday was shot dead, carrying from the barracks to the intrenchments a little hare soup, which he had begged for his famishing wife. . . . And there were some who died hopelessly, though not in the flesh; for the horrors of the siege were greater than they could bear, and madness fell upon them, perhaps as a merciful dispensation.'

This terrible agony was prolonged over three weeks. No reinforcements arrived; no tidings were heard of approaching relief. Their provisions were exhausted, and famine seemed to claim them as its victims; their guns were rapidly becoming unserviceable; their supplies of ammunition had dangerously decreased; their numbers were so reduced that they could scarcely find men to guard the defences . . . What was to be done? No one spoke of surrender; yet what other alternative presented itself, unless they could blow up their asylum, and perish in its ruins, or plunge into the midst of the besieging hosts, and fall, fighting? At this juncture came a message from the

Nana to the effect that 'all who were in no way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie, and were willing to lay down their arms, should receive a safe passage to Allahabad.' To the capitulation thus insolently offered Sir Hugh Wheeler was strongly opposed; but Moore and Whiting, brave soldiers though they were, advocated its acceptance, as affording the only means of rescuing the women and children. An armistice was arranged, and negotiations with the Nana were then opened. The result was, that the British agreed to surrender their fortified position, guns, and treasure, on condition that they were allowed to march out with their arms, and sixty rounds of ammunition for each man; and that the Nana should escort them safely to the river-side, and furnish boats to carry them down the Ganges to Allahabad.

On the following morning, the 27th, the British took their departure; the able-bodied marching first, and the wounded being carried in palanquins, while the women and children rode on the backs of elephants or in rough bullock-carriages. Through crowded streets they made their way to the place of embarkation, the Suttee Chowra Ghat. There the boats were ready, and our people hastened to embark, exulting probably in what seemed the near prospect of peace and security. None were prepared for, none expected, the black deed of murderous treachery which has handed down the name and memory of the Nana to perpetual execration. By his direction, Tantia Topee and some other of his confidants, had massed the Sepoy soldiery on the banks of the Ganges; and as soon as our people were on board the boats, a bugle rang out its shrill orders, and a murderous fire of grape shot and musketry opened upon the fugitives. Some of the most active, leaping into the water, put their shoulders to the boats, and urged them into mid-channel; but the bulk of the fleet remained immovable, and was soon in flames. The sick and wounded were burnt to death or suffocated by the smoke; the stronger women, with

children in their arms, leaped into the river, where they were shot down or sabred by the horsemen, or bayoneted if they attempted to climb the bank, or reserved for what proved to be even a crueller fate. 'In the boat where I was to have gone,' said a half-caste Christian woman, who eventually escaped, 'was the school mistress and twenty-two missies. General Wheeler came last, in a palkee. They carried him into the water, near the boat. I stood close by. The general said, "Carry me a little further towards the boat." But a trooper said: "No; get out here." As the general got out of the palkee, head foremost, the trooper gave him a cut with his sword into the neck, and he fell into the water. My son was killed near him; I saw it; alas! alas! Some were stabbed with bayonets; others cut down. Little infants were torn in pieces. We saw it, we did; and tell you only what we saw. Other children were stabbed and thrown into the river. The school girls were burnt to death. I saw their clothes and hair catch fire. In the water, a few paces off, by the next boat, we saw the youngest daughter of Colonel Williams. A Sepoy was going to kill her with his bayonet. She said, "my father was always kind to Sepoys." He turned away, and just then a villager struck her on the head with his club, and she fell into the water.'

This indiscriminate ferocity—this foul massacre of women and children—is one of the most inexplicable features of the Sepoy Mutiny. It would seem as if the Sepoys rebelled not so much against a Government as against a race—not against their officers, so much as against all Europeans; and evidently religious fanaticism was the ruling passion which rendered them insensible to all emotions of pity or gratitude.

Whether from a temporary feeling of remorse, or from some vague idea that their lives might be made more profitable than their deaths, the Nana was induced to limit the massacre, and to issue orders that while all the men were

killed, the women and children should be spared. And thus it was that one hundred and twenty-five unfortunate creatures—unfortunate indeed, for a swift death had been better for them than a lingering agony—were brought back to Cawnpore, and confined in two large rooms in the Savada House. It must here be added, however, that one of the boats got away, and under a heavy fire, dropped down the stream. Its passengers fell rapidly, for the Sepoys were good marksmen; but the survivors were Englishmen, and kept on their dangerous course with English tenacity. On the morning of the 29th, however, the boat drifted into a creek or siding, where the enemy soon discovered and opened fire upon it. With brilliant daring, a couple of officers (Mowbray Thomson and Delafosse), with a handful of English soldiers, landed and attacked them. Through the crowd of armed and unarmed Sepoys and villagers they charged heroically, and, having scattered them in all directions, returned to the landing-place. The boat was gone! It had floated down the river, those on board having neither oars nor rudder with which to guide its course. Eventually it was overtaken by the rebels, and carried back to Cawnpore, with its living freight of eighty men, women, and children. The men were remorselessly shot to death; the women and children sent to join the prisoners in the Savada House. As for the two officers and their comrades, they were quickly surrounded by the enemy, and seven of the fourteen perished in a desperate charge. The other seven took to the stream. Of these two were shot through the head; a third, spent with fatigue, made for a sandbank, and was killed as soon as he landed. The four survivors, after a series of hair-breadth escapes, contrived to reach the territory of a friendly Raja, who sheltered and supported them; and they lived to tell the tale of the Nana's treachery, and of the evil doings at Cawnpore.

Let us now return to Cawnpore, where the Nana was enjoying his hour of triumph. To his mind the hated English *raj*, or rule, was at an end for ever. There were no living Englishmen in the blood-stained city to oppose his pretensions; he was free to take upon himself the dignity of Peishwa, to issue magniloquent proclamations, to wallow in the rankest sensuality, and to bribe his soldiery with lavish gifts and still more lavish promises. But before long the unwelcome tidings spread through his palace, and through the barracks of the troops, that a British army, thirsting for revenge, and terrible in its just wrath, was marching against Cawnpore. The Nana was roused from his wild debauchery, and trembled as every day brought nearer the avengers. He felt that his fabric of power would soon pass away like an unsubstantial dream. Then came to him the thought—Could he do nothing, before those victorious warriors came, to satisfy his lust of blood and his insane hatred of the English! Yes: two hundred and one women and children and five men (the number had been increased by prisoners from Futteghur) were in his hands, and he would not spare them—they, too, should perish! It was necessary that he should act quickly, however, or they might escape him; for many were dying of cholera and dysentery, and such other diseases as naturally spring out of privation and ill-usage, aggravated by a malarious atmosphere.

With six guns and 1000 English soldiers, 130 Sikhs, and a small troop of volunteer cavalry,—eighteen sabres only,—Brigadier General Havelock, who had been entrusted with the command of the detachment, moved northward from Allahabad on the 7th of July. He overtook and absorbed into his army Major Renaud's column of 800 men, one half Europeans, one half Sikhs, which had started on the 30th of June, soon after midnight of the 11th and 12th of July, as it was marching unconsciously into the very midst of Nana Sahib's army, collected at Futtehpur, about

forty-five miles below Cawnpore. Early on the morning of the 12th, Havelock delivered his attack. It was swift, direct, and crushing; and in ten minutes the enemy gave way. 'It was scarcely a battle; but it was a consummate victory. Our Enfield rifles and our guns would not permit a conflict. The service of the artillery was superb. There had come upon the scene a new warrior, of whom India had before known nothing; but whose name from that day became terrible to our enemies. The improvised battery of which Havelock made such splendid use, was commanded by Captain Maude of the Royal Artillery. He had come round from Ceylon, with a few gunners, but without guns; and he had gone at once to the front, as one of the finest artillerymen in the world. The best troops of the Nana Sahib, with a strength of artillery exceeding our own, could make no stand against such a fire as was opened upon them.

This brilliant little action is thus described by Havelock himself:—

'Futtehpur,' he says, 'constitutes a position of no small strength. The hard and dry trunk road sub-divides it, and is the only means of convenient access, for the plains on both sides are covered at this season by heavy lodgments of water, to the depth of two, three, and four feet. It is surrounded by garden enclosures of great strength, with high walls, and has within it many houses of good masonry. In front of the swamps are hillocks, villages, and orange groves, which the enemy already occupied in force. I estimate his number at 3500, with twelve brass and iron guns. I made my dispositions. The guns, now eight in number, were formed on and close to the chaussée, in the centre, under Captain Maude, R.A., protected and aided by one hundred Enfield riflemen of the 64th. The detachments of infantry were at the same moment thrown into line of quarter distance columns, at deploying distance, and thus advanced in support, covered at discretion by Enfield skirmishers. The

small force of volunteers and irregular cavalry moved forward on the flanks on harder ground. I might say that, in ten minutes, the action was decided, for in that short space of time the spirit of the enemy was entirely subdued. The rifle fire reaching them at an unexpected distance, filled them with dismay; and when Captain Maude was enabled to push his guns through flanking-swamps to point-blank range, his surprisingly accurate fire demolished their little remaining confidence. In a moment these guns were abandoned to us on the chaussée, and the force advanced steadily, driving the enemy before it at every point.'

The battle was fought and won under no small difficulty; for our men had previously had a twenty-four hours' march, and had tasted no food since the preceding afternoon. When the struggle, which lasted four hours, was at an end, they sank down on the ground, thoroughly spent, about a mile from the field, unable to continue the pursuit. On the following day, July 13, Havelock issued the following general order:—

'General Havelock thanks his soldiers for their arduous exertions of yesterday, which produced, in four hours, the strange result of a rebel army driven from a strong position, eleven guns captured, and their whole force scattered to the winds, without the loss of a single British soldier. To what is this astounding effect to be attributed? To the fire of British artillery, exceeding in rapidity and precision all that the brigadier has ever witnessed in his not short career; to the power of the Enfield rifle in British hands; to British pluck, that great quality which has survived the vicissitudes of the hour, and gained intensity from the crisis; and to the blessing of Almighty God on a most righteous cause, the cause of justice, humanity, truth, and good government in India.'

Futtehpur, which had been one of the centres of disaffection, was given up to plunder. Then Havelock resumed his march, and on the 15th fell in with large bodies of the

enemy strongly posted at Aong. In a couple of hours they were soundly beaten; and, leaving behind them their tents, carriages, stores, and munitions of war, fled from the field. At Aong the relieving force was within twenty-three miles of Cawnpore, and as upwards of 200 European women and children were reported to be still alive, every soldier burned to push forward to their rescue, and to the punishment of their cruel and treacherous jailer.

A march of sixteen miles brought them next day to the village of Maharajpore. Here information was obtained that Nana Sahib, in person, had encamped, with 5000 men and eight guns, in a strong position, near the village of Aheerwa, and about seven miles outside of Cawnpore. Their front was so strongly covered that an attack upon it would have involved great loss, and Havelock, therefore, manœuvred to turn their position on the left. His men, screened by a grove of trees, advanced until within cannon range, when the Sepoys discovered them and immediately opened fire from a battery of 24-pounders. As these did much execution, Havelock ordered the 78th Highlanders to charge with the bayonets. The guns were taken, and the enemy's left being completely crushed, their infantry fell back to the rear, and divided into two bodies, one of which retired a few hundred yards on the road to the Cawnpore cantonments, while the other rallied near a howitzer which defended the centre. Havelock therefore sent forward the 78th, exclaiming: 'Now, Highlanders, another charge like that wins the day!' They responded with a cheer and a rush, and assisted by the 64th, who emulated their heroic impetuosity, captured the howitzer, and sent the Sepoys reeling back. The right, meanwhile, had been completely discomfited. Some contention, however, was still kept up in one of the villages where the fugitives had rallied. To consummate his victory, Havelock made another appeal to the enthusiasm of his troops:—'Come,' he said, 'who'll take that village, the Highlanders or the 64th?' The question was

not put in vain: through the smoke went the glitter of steel—the village was carried—and the victory won.

Yes; but another battle had to be fought, and another victory won. When the Sepoys to all appearances were in full retreat, a couple of light guns and a 24-pounder, which had been planted in reserve on the Cawnpore road, suddenly opened a destructive fire; and Havelock perceived that Nana Sahib had summoned to his assistance reinforcements from Cawnpore, who were fresh and unwearied. As our guns were a mile in the rear, Havelock halted his men, and bade them lie down for shelter from the fire which tore gaps in their ranks. The Sepoys misconstrued the pause as due to alarm or weakness, and were greatly exhilarated, while Nana Sahib rode among them and encouraged them by every means in his power. It was soon evident that a great effort was to be made; drums beat and trumpets rang. Their horsemen spread out in the form of a crescent, and a general advance was prepared against the small British force, now reduced to 800 men. 'My military cattle,' says Havelock, 'wearied by the length of the march, could not bring the guns to my assistance, and the Madras Fusiliers, the 64th, 84th, and 78th detachments formed in line, were exposed to a heavy fire from the 24-pounder on the road. I was resolved this state of things should not last, so calling upon my men who were lying down in line to leap to their feet, I directed another steady advance. It was irresistible. The enemy sent round shot into our ranks until we were within 300 yards, and then poured in grape with such precision and determination as I have seldom witnessed. But the 64th, led by Major Stirling, and by my aide-de-camp [the general's own son, afterwards Sir Henry Havelock-Allan], who had placed himself in their front, were not to be denied. Their rear showed the ground strewn with wounded, but on they steadily and silently went, then with a cheer charged and captured the unwieldy trophy of their valour. The enemy lost all heart, and after

a hurried fire of musketry, gave way in total rout. Four of my guns came up, and completed their discomfiture by a heavy cannonade; and as it grew dark, the roofless barracks of an artillery were dimly descried in advance, and it was evident that Cawnpore was once more in our possession.'

Next morning, the 17th, he entered the town; too late to save, but not to avenge. He had already been apprised of the mournful fact that the captive women and children whom he had hoped to rescue, had perished at the hands of their merciless enemies.

For, on the afternoon of the 15th—the day of the battle of Aong—whether in mad rage, or brutal fear, or out of sheer lust of blood; whether because they believed that the sole object of the British was to deliver the prisoners, and that on hearing of their death they would retire discomfited; or whether because they supposed that by killing all the captives they would have no witnesses to identify them if a day of retribution ever arrived: the Nana and his confederates resolved upon their massacre. Orders to this effect were issued; and immediately the five male prisoners were dragged forth and slain before the Nana's cruel eyes. A party of Sepoys was next told off to shoot the women and children through the doors and windows of the prison-house. Let it be recorded to their honour that they refused to obey; so that it became necessary to hire a couple of Hindu peasants, a couple of Mohammedan butchers, and a Mohammedan belonging to the Nana's body guard, who, armed with swords or long sharp knives, entered the bloody chamber, and, before nightfall, hacked and stabbed to death the helpless prisoners.*

The sun had been up about three hours, when, next day, the murderers, accompanied by a few sweepers, hastened to remove the bodies of their victims, and throw them into a

* Sir George O. Trevelyan, 'Cawnpore.'

dry well situated behind some neighbouring trees. 'They were dragged out,' says an eye-witness, 'most of them by the hair of the head. Those who had clothes worth taking were stripped. Some of the women were alive. I cannot say how many; but three could speak. They prayed for the sake of God that an end might be put to their sufferings. I remarked one very stout woman, a half-caste, who was severely wounded in both arms, who entreated to be killed. She and two or three others were placed against the bank of the cut by which bullocks go down in drawing water. The dead were first thrown in. Yes; there was a great crowd looking on; they were standing along the walls of the compound. They were principally city people and villagers. Yes; there were also Sepoys. Three boys were alive. They were fair children. The eldest, I think, must have been six or seven and the youngest five years. They were running round the well (where else could they go to?), and there was none to save them. No; none said a word, or tried to save them.'

The instigator of this foul butchery, Nana Sahib, unfortunately escaped the avenger's hand. From Cawnpore he fled to Bithoor, and thence, impelled by a perpetual dread of British vengeance, crossed the Nepaulese marshes to close his days, it is supposed, among the dreary solitudes of the Himalaya—haunted, we are willing to believe, by the dreadful memories of his crimes, and ceaselessly pursued by disappointment and remorse.

'Few of the Cawnpore mutineers,' says Trevelyan, 'survived to boast of their enterprise. Evil hunted these men to their overthrow. Those whom the halter and the bayonet spared had no reason to bless their exemption. . . . All who returned to their villages empty-handed, were greeted by their indignant families with bitter and most just reproaches. They had been excellently provided for by the bounty of God and the Company; their pay secured them all the comforts which a Brahman may enjoy, and left the

wherewithal to help less fortunate kinsmen; yet they flung away their advantages in wilful and selfish haste. They sinned alone and for their private ends; but alone they were not to suffer. They had changed the sahibs into demons, and had conjured up tenfold more of these demons than had hitherto been conceived to exist; they had called down untold calamities upon the quiet peasantry of their native land; and all this misery they had wrought in pursuit of the vision of a military empire. Let them return to the desert, there to feed without interruption on the contemplation of their power and pre-eminence. Such were the taunts with which they were driven forth again into the jungles; some to die by the claws of tigers, on whose lair they had intruded for refuge, or beneath the clubs of herdsmen whose cattle they had pilfered in the rage of hunger; others to wander about drenched and famished, until amidst the branches of a tree into which they had climbed to seek safety from the hyænas and the ague, or on the sandy floor of a cave whither they had crept for shelter from the tempest, they found at once their deathbed and their sepulchre. The jackals alone can tell on what bush flutter the shreds of scarlet stuff which mark the spot where one of our revolted mercenaries has expiated his broken oath.'

Havelock, as soon as he had re-established the British government in Cawnpore, and provided for its safety by raising a strongly entrenched camp on a plateau near the right bank of the river, into which he threw a British garrison, under Brigadier-General Neill, hastened to accomplish the second part of his task, the relief of the Europeans beleagured by rebels at Lucknow. With only 1500 men he crossed the Ganges and entered the territory of Oudh—the only part of the empire where the population had made common cause with the Sepoys. His march was one of great difficulty and hazard; and almost every day he had to encounter large bodies of the enemy. On the 29th of

July he fought and conquered at Onao. At Busseerutgunge he fought another battle and gained another victory. Hemmed in by numbers, he was compelled to own that his force was too inadequate, numerically, for the work it had to do; and on the 30th, he fell back to Mungulwar, to await the arrival of reinforcements. In a day or two he made a second attempt to penetrate into Oudh; but after again beating the Sepoys at Busseerutgunge, on the 5th of August, was compelled to return, and ensure the safety of Cawnpore by attacking a large body of rebels at Bithoor, on the 16th. Having gained a decisive victory, which would have been still more complete if he had had cavalry to pursue the routed foe, he again posted himself at Cawnpore, where he contrived to hold his own, though his little army was terribly weakened by cholera and other diseases, until the long-expected reinforcements arrived. About the middle of September troops began to pour in continuously, and with them came Sir James Outram, sometimes called 'the Bayard of the Indian Army.' He had been appointed as senior officer to the command; but in a spirit of true chivalry elected to serve under Havelock as a volunteer,* until the latter had concluded the enterprise he had prosecuted with so much energy, and carried the British colours victorious into Lucknow.

On the 19th of September, flushed with hope and strong in endurance, Havelock's soldiers crossed the Ganges, and, driving the Sepoys before them advanced into Oudh. They came in sight of Lucknow on the 23rd; and dividing into two columns delivered a vehement attack,—fighting their way into the heart of the city, through streets and

* 'The Major-General,' he announced, 'in gratitude for and admiration of the brilliant deeds in arms achieved by General Havelock and his gallant troops, will cheerfully waive his rank on the occasion; and will accompany the force to Lucknow in his civil capacity as Chief Commissioner of Oudh, tending his military services to General Havelock as volunteer. On the relief of Lucknow, the Major-General will resume his position at the head of the force.'

lanes swept by incessant discharges of grape-shot and musket-balls,—where every house had been converted into a fortalice, and compelling the masses of rebel troops and hostile townsfolk to yield before them. The desperate march cost many valuable lives, including that of Brigadier Neill, one of the most dashing and courageous of leaders, but at length the relieving force gained the Residency, and accomplished its deliverance.

His work was thus far done, and Havelock gave up the command of the army to Sir James Outram. The relief of the garrison had been accomplished, but to recover possession of the town was impossible with so small an army, and Outram was in his turn besieged by the rebels, and compelled to await the arrival of Sir Colin Campbell (afterwards Lord Clyde), who, at the head of a well-equipped army, was swiftly advancing towards the North-West provinces. He arrived at Cawnpore on the 3rd of November. Six days later he was encamped at the Alum-Bagh, near Lucknow, where he remained a week, communicating with the Residency garrison and Sir Henry Havelock, and concerting measures for their rescue. On the 16th, after a sharp fight, he captured the Secunderabagh, an important position, and being joined by Havelock and his soldiers, again attacked the Sepoys on the 18th, and in spite of a strenuous resistance, cut his way into the city. The struggle was renewed on the following day, and fearful as were the odds against them, the intrepid courage of the British finally overcame the opposition. Sir Colin, however, like Sir James Outram, found he was not strong enough to hold the city down, and, moreover, he was urgently needed elsewhere. He therefore removed the entire body of Europeans and faithful natives in the Residency, with their stores and treasure, and quitted Lucknow—the rebels offering but a feeble opposition—on the 23rd, leaving behind him the remains of the gallant Havelock, who, on the preceding day, had died of dysentery, induced

or aggravated by exposure, anxiety, and fatigue. He retired rapidly upon Cawnpore, where the condition of affairs had assumed an unfavourable aspect. General Windham, who had been left there in command, had been defeated, with great loss, in a vigorous but ill-planned movement against the rebels of Gwalior; and the latter, elated with their success, had pushed forward boldly, and occupied part of Cawnpore. They were driven out by Sir Colin on the 28th. He then repaired and strengthened the defences of the town, and, having made provision for the safety of the women and children whom he had brought from Lucknow, he set out in pursuit of the Gwalior mutineers, overtook them by rapid marches, and crushed them with great slaughter on the 6th of December.

Large reinforcements had by this time arrived from England, and had rapidly been pushed forward to the theatre of war. A naval brigade, under Captain Sir William Peel of the *Shannon*, had been formed, and admirable was the service rendered by our tars with the big guns,—displaying a wonderful composure under fire, and preserving in the most arduous circumstances the proverbial hilarious good temper of the British seaman. When Sir Colin Campbell, early in February, 1858, undertook the re-conquest and pacification of Oudh, he had under his command a force of 18,277 men (infantry, 12,498; cavalry 3169; artillery, 1745; and engineers, 815). The investment of Lucknow began on the 4th and was completed by the 12th of March; and after its defences had been battered down by a tremendous artillery fire, the British forces carried the city by a succession of fierce assaults—in one of which fell the famous trooper, Major Hodson of Hodson's Horse—extending over several days, from the 16th to the 19th. The punishment inflicted on the rebels was very severe. Apparently to the satisfaction of all the peaceable population, the British flag waved once more from the walls of Lucknow.

The pacification of Oudh, however, was not accomplished until late in the year. Leaving Sir Hope Grant in command at Lucknow, Lord Clyde marched into Rohilcund, where he defeated the rebels in the Battle of Bareilly, and, during the rainy season, established his head-quarters at Futtehghur. On the 2nd of November, he re-crossed the Ganges, and drove the scattered bodies of the rebels from point to point, until, on the last day of the year, those who had not surrendered fled across the frontier into the marshes of Nepaul, where they speedily fell victims to the pestilential airs. 'Thus,' wrote Lord Clyde, in his dispatch to the Queen, 'thus has the contest in Oudh been brought to an end, and the resistance of one hundred and fifty thousand armed men been subdued with a very moderate loss to your Majesty's troops, and the most merciful forbearance towards the misguided enemy.'

CHAPTER V

THE ABYSSINIAN WAR

IN days when history is made so rapidly, when great events succeed one another with a swiftness which would have startled our grandfathers into lunacy, it may be convenient to the reader to be reminded of the circumstances in which originated the Abyssinian War of 1868.

As early as 1865 the attention of the British Parliament was directed to the harsh treatment which certain British subjects were experiencing at the hands of Theodore, the 'Negus,' or King of Abyssinia. Among those whom he detained in captivity, were Captain Cameron, the British consul at Massowah, with his secretary and some servants; Mr Hormuzd Rassam, a Syrian Christian and naturalised subject of the Queen; Lieutenant Prideaux, and Dr Blanc. These men had been seized by Theodore while they were actually engaged on official business of the British Government; and the national honour was therefore engaged in their deliverance. Yet it was evident that this would be a task of considerable delicacy as well as difficulty, for there

was ever the fear that, on the first appearance of a military movement, Theodore, a man of strong barbaric temper, might order the massacre of the prisoners. But all attempts at conciliation having failed, an ultimatum was sent by Lord Stanley, in 1867, demanding their release within three months on penalty of war. No reply was made to this dispatch—and, indeed, it does not seem to have reached the King's hands. An expedition was accordingly determined upon, the command of which was entrusted to Sir Robert Napier (now Lord Napier of Magdala), Commander-in-Chief of the army of Bombay. The force assembled for this purpose consisted of 12,000 men—2000 to garrison a sea depot at Zorella, and Senap on the Abyssinian Highlands; 2000 men to hold Antalo, situated half-way between the coast and Magdala, the rock-based capital of Theodore; 2000 men to guard the lines of communication; and 6000 men for the marching column. The advanced guard of this compact little army landed on the beach of Zorella in the month of November, 1867; and thenceforward, for two months, men, stores, and supplies of all kinds, with baggage and commissariat animals, were disembarked at short intervals. A detachment was advanced into the interior to occupy Senap; and a convenient military road constructed from the coast to the Highlands. After preparations which had been devised with foresight and completed with energy, the march from Antalo was begun on the 3rd of March. One who saw the military pageant enables us to reproduce some of its picturesque details:—

‘First came an Irish regiment, each soldier bearded like a pard, and bronzed by the tropic sun, all weather-beaten veterans, inured to life-long campaigns in India, to Himalaya snows, and fervid days in Scinde. Above their heads waved the regimental banner, which was tossed several times on the deadly fields of the Iberian Peninsula, and had received reverence from Wellington.

‘Then came the 4th Regiment, the King's Own, with a

regimental flag tattered and torn by the gushing storms of fire and lead in the Crimean campaign. After these came the Native troops, the 29th Native Infantry, called the Punjaubees, tall, well-formed men from the Punjab districts of India; the Belooch Regiment—Beloochees with ample green turbans, and red fezzes round their heads, dressed in green uniforms with red facings; and the 10th Native Infantry, composed of Sepoys, who were taken from particular districts and tribes.

‘After them, again, came the cavalry, the Scinde Horse, with plaited crimson cloth folded round their heads like turbans. They were dressed in green cloth uniforms, and their horses had green shabracks. Each man was armed with a short double-barrelled rifle and talwar.

‘The officers wore silver helmets on their heads. Behind the cavalry regiment came Sir Robert Napier and Sir Charles Staveley, attended by their respective staffs, well dressed and well mounted.

‘The head-quarter staff was followed by a company of the 3rd Light Cavalry, Native Indians, all smart soldierly-looking men, though some of them, native officers, bobbed along in their saddles as if they were riding to rackets on a hard-mouthed native tattoo (pony).

‘In the rear of these came the artillery, a battery of six Armstrong guns; the elephants and the transport train, the whole stretching over a distance of seven miles. The muleteers formed quite an army by themselves. There were 7000 mules in the transport train attached to the 2nd brigade of the first division, commanded by Sir C. Staveley, and for these were required at least 3000 men; but including the camp followers, mahouts, elephant attendants, and camel drivers, this force was increased to nearly 7000 men.

‘Besides these people may be added the native settlers, vendors of tobacco, ghee, halub, barley, bread, and herdsmen driving the beeves and goats for the commissariat . . . Also, the dhoolie bearers, dhobies [washer-men,] and the

bheasties [drivers of oxen carrying water,] who swelled to a large extent the strange multitude called together for the crusade. Such varied physiognomies were never seen in our modern army; while the colour of their uniform, cloths, rags, turbans, tarbooches, was of the most kaleidoscopic kind.

‘Poles from the Bastarnic Alps, and bearded stalwart fellows from the Sarmatian wilds chatted gaily with voluble Frenchmen and staid-looking Germans. The turbaned Turk, with the passionate fires of his temperament somnolent under the virtues of his inseparable narghileh, trudged along leisurely, with no desire on earth save that which he was then exercising; and swarthy Arabs inhaling fumes of a sweet morsel of Latakiah. The olive-cheeked Jew, remarkable for his mysterious limpid eyes of jet, stalked onward at the head of his little string of mules—for the nonce oblivious of the country, the crusade, and his occupation, indulging in day-dreams of some treasure he had hidden somewhere, or of his elevation into the business of a diamond-merchant on his return from African territory. Esurient-looking Parsees, or Guebers from Persia, were on the look-out for a chance to turn an honest rupee into two, plodded onward industriously side by side with parlous Jewish muleteers. Well-oiled Sikhs from the Mahrattas held animating conversations with gentlemanly Sepoy guards from the Deccan; and rolling on in never-ending succession were ferocious Soumalis from Soumali Land, ugly-faced Berbera men, Janus-hearted Brogales, wild-looking Shohoes, athletic Nubians, and daring Hazortites.’

The military difficulties to be encountered by this formidable force were not serious. It was certain that no Abyssinian army could resist it in the open field. But Magdala was known to occupy a position of great natural strength, which its defenders, encouraged by the example of their King, might be expected to hold tenaciously. The

advance upon it had to be made across four hundred miles of rugged, mountainous country, destitute of roads . . . now under a burning sun, and now amid storms of rain and sleet,—through intricate and dreary ravines, and over steep peaks and precipices ten thousand feet above the sea-level. Even a savage foe, in such a country, might inflict considerable loss upon the invaders, and the mere transport of provisions and supplies was a task which had in it the possibilities of failure.

‘Meanwhile,’ says the historian, ‘the captives were dragging out life in the very bitterness of death. The King oscillated between caprices of kindness and impulses of cruelty. He sometimes strolled in upon the prisoners in careless undress; perhaps in European shirt and trousers, without a coat; and he cheerily brought with him a bottle of wine, which he insisted on the captives sharing with him. At other times he visited them in the mood of one who loved to feast his eyes on the anticipatory terrors of the victims he has determined to destroy. He had still great faith in the fighting power of his Abyssinians. Sometimes he was in high spirits, and declared that he longed for an encounter with the invaders. At other moments, and when the steady certain march of the British soldiers was bringing them nearer and nearer, he seems to have lost heart and become impressed with a boding conviction that nothing would ever go well with him again.’

With prudent patience the British general led his army slowly into the interior. His diplomatic, as well as his military skill, was in constant activity, and he rallied to his side the most influential of the native chiefs, including Prince Kusia, Wagshuni Gobazye, Prince of Samur, and Merrilek, King of Shon. Thus he ensured the safety of his communications, and the regularity of his supplies. But all his movements evidenced a steady purpose and a clear foresight; and a design to accomplish the end of his expedition with the smallest possible loss of life. Any great rapidity

of progress was, to be sure, impossible ; an army of 6000 men, with a train of 10,000 or 12,000 animals, dragging along a difficult mountain track in single file, must necessarily move slowly. The day's operations were somewhat as follows :—

At daybreak the reveille sounded, the vanguard bestired itself, and in half-an-hour was in motion, bound for a camp selected at some suitable point by the pioneers two days in advance. The transport train was drawn out before the respective regiments ; the baggage packed and slung on the mules ; after which it formed in line along the road until the column should have passed. All were on the alert by six o'clock, when the military band struck up a lively tune, and the long procession of infantry, cavalry, artillery, seamen, elephants, mules, and attendants, began to wind along the mountain path.

By noon the head of the column generally arrived at the new camp. Two hours later, the head of the baggage train would make its appearance ; and until midnight, and even until next morning, weary animals would arrive. Sometimes a day's halt was necessary to enable these animals to rest, and recruit their exhausted energies.

On steep ascents the elephants, laboriously stalking with their heavy burdens, were invariably outstripped by the smaller baggage animals ; but where the road was moderately easy, these gigantic animals, each with loads of 15 cwt. on their backs, would readily pass them. They were at once the terror and the delight of the natives who crowded around them, and seemed never weary of observing their silent sagacity. Their value in the campaign can hardly be over-estimated. The daily rations of each were thirty-five pounds of bread and forty pounds of straw.

On their first arrival in a new camp the soldiers, while leaving the regimental cooks to prepare the meals, performed their albutions, and then betook themselves to their various amusements. Like most Englishmen, they were

exceedingly partial to gymnastic exercises, and a curious and lively scene would the area of the camp present.

‘About sunset martial strains of music invariably burst forth from the brazen instruments of the military bands. For the first time the circumambient mountains echoed to the wondrous sounds; and each native, leaning on his spear, wrapt in silence would drink in, with undisguised pleasure and intense delight, the harmonious sounds which soothed his soul. Twilight was a time which imparted pleasure to all. The music from a distance sounded indescribably sweet, and infused a delicious melancholy into the soul, causing our minds to wander over rugged ranges of Abyssinian mountains, across the blue seas, into our own far-off homes, where we imagined, in fancy free, the social family circle arranged around the cheerful fire, discoursing of the absent ones.’

From Antalo the army went on to Mesheek, thence to Atzala—Mukhan—Lake Ashangi, where some Galla chiefs tendered amity—Muzzaguta—Lat—the road, or track, ascending and descending steep and rugged hills in unending succession—and, leaving tents and baggage behind, onward to Marowar—further and further in among the mountains, to Dildee, an exhausting march of eighteen miles. There the army enjoyed a day’s rest. The advance was then resumed to Muja—Santarai—still in and among the mountains—higher and higher—11,000 feet above the level of ocean—Gazoo, Abdecoom, Sindhe—through the Jeddah ravine and up to the summit of the plateau of Dahonte Dalanta, where the whole force encamped on the 7th of April. From this elevated position Sir Robert could reconnoitre across the deep valley of the Beshilo, the rocky fastness of Magdala, where Theodore, King of Abyssinia, was sullenly awaiting his doom.

On Good Friday, the 10th, Napier led his army down into the Beshilo valley, and crossed the river, with the view of carrying the heights of Selason and Fahla, prior to the

intended attack upon Magdala. 'The two hostile forces,' says Markham, 'which during six months had been very slowly converging from Debra Tabor and the sea to the same point at Magdala, were now nearly face to face. On that dark basaltic rock was the hunted fallen King, with only 3000 soldiers armed with percussion guns and match-locks, a rabble of spearmen, and a number of pieces of ordnance which his strong will had created, but which his people knew not how to use. He had overcome difficulties which would have daunted a less courageous tyrant, and had come there to die. With a well-armed and sufficiently large force his position was one of the most formidable that could have been selected, but with such troops as he had, who in opposition to the English were virtually unarmed, and with his diminished numbers, the place was quite untenable. Moreover, the Abyssinians were discouraged by the ceaseless toil of the previous months, and by the harassing attacks of rebels. Those who had not deserted were ready to do so on the first opportunity, and only a faithful few could be depended upon to stand by their brave master to the bitter end. His mighty prestige alone kept the shattered remains of his army together.

'On the other hand the British were nearly equal in numbers to their enemies; they were armed and provided with all that modern science could suggest, were in a friendly country with abundant supplies, and had just completed a march in a delightful climate, with no enemy in the field.' Sir Robert's force, including cavalry amounted to 3733 men; but the cavalry, 460 strong, were halted on the Beshilo.

After wading across the river, the men clambered up the steepest and ruggedest acclivity they had met with in Abyssinia, to Aficho. A descent, scarcely less steep, led from the Aficho plateau to the plain of Arogyi.

Opposite rose the lofty stronghold of Theodore, more than a thousand feet above the plain—to the left the rocky

peak of Selassyi, to the right the flat-topped hill of Fala, the two heights being connected by a low saddle-backed ridge. The sides of the ascent were furrowed with shallow gullies, and covered with low bushes. An absolute silence prevailed upon these rugged rocks, and no signs of life were visible.

It was forty-two minutes past four in the afternoon. A gun was suddenly fired from the crest of the Fala, 1200 feet above the Arogyi plain; another, and another; the shot plunging into the ground, and showing that the British were well within range. After a few rounds, a force of several thousand men, the best of Theodore's remaining troops, swarmed over the height of the Fala and the saddle-backed ridge, and with shouts of defiance swept down the precipitous decline. The chiefs were astride on sure-footed Galla ponies; about 1000 of the soldiers were armed with double-barrelled guns, and 2000 with matchlocks, the remainder being a mere horde of spearmen. Soon they began to cross the plain of Arogyi, a large detachment diverging in the direction of the baggage-train.

'Nearer and nearer was the advent of the enemy, 3500 strong. They all appeared confident of the issue. Their war songs came pealing towards us. We could see their cavalry caracoling and bounding joyously along; the foot soldiers leaping and brandishing long spears and swinging their black shields. With loud chorus all sang the death-doom of the invader.

'Onward, still onward they came, horsemen and foot soldiers vying with each other. They flung their flowing symas, their bozans, and many flung their loin clouts away, and with lances and shields in rest, they bore down the hill, reached the plateau, and inundated it with their dusky bodies. A clear open plain was before them, over which they rolled like a huge wave!'

The blue jackets of the Naval Brigade had by this time got their rocket tubes into position, and they opened a de-

structive fire on the advancing mass. Then up came the gallant men of the 'King's Own'—some 300 of them, formed in a 'thin red line.' Through scrub oak and under brush they made their way until they debouched right in front of the enemy.

'Commence firing from both flanks,' rang out as a silver bell from Colonel Cameron; and, instantaneously two quick volleys of musketry were flashed in the faces of the dusky foe, and like a stream of fire volleys ran from side to side without a pause, raining such a storm of leaden hail, that for the second time the enemy halted from sheer astonishment. It was as if they were paralysed at the very moment they intended to launch out their spears, and one could almost fancy that these weapons vibrated in their hands, from the impetus they were about to give them. Slowly they seemed to regain consciousness, and horrified, they gazed upon the awful result. Strangest sight it was to them, who had ever been victorious in the field of battle, to see their own men tumble by the dozen, by scores, by fifties, into the embrace of death.

"Retreat!" cried the chiefs. The enemy did retreat, but not fast enough. They broke out *en tirailleur*, and endeavoured to take vantage of boulders to escape the whizzing bullets; but the bullets found them out, searched out each bush and around each rock, and stretched the men behind dead upon the ground.

'Here was one running for dear life for a copse; but suddenly you saw him leap into the air and fall on his face, clutching the ground savagely. Here was another one, with head bent low, in the vain thought that if his head escaped he would be safe, making all haste to get into a hollow, out of reach of the leaden storm; but even as the haven dawned upon his frenzied eyes, a whirring pellet caught him, and sent him rolling down the incline. There was another one, just about to dodge behind a massive boulder, from where he could take slight revenge, but

before he could ensconce himself, the unerring ball went crashing through his brain; and there was another one about to plunge in hot haste down a ravine to the left, who had his skull shattered by a rocket, and with a dull sound the body fell down the precipice.'

The rest of the British force rapidly came into action, and the Abyssinians, though they behaved with great gallantry, could not withstand the immense preponderance of power which was arrayed against them. The ground was strewn with evidences of slaughter—the ravine was literally choked with the dead and dying, and the little stream that watered it was crimson with blood. It is known that the Abyssinians lost from 700 to 800 killed, and 1500 were wounded, most of them severely. Many of the survivors fled into the mountains, and did not return to Magdala; while all night long the Abyssinians could be heard calling to their wounded comrades, and bearing them off the field. The disproportion between the fighting power of the two combatants is emphatically illustrated by the fact that out of the 2000 British and Indian soldiers actually engaged only thirty-two were put *hors de combat*.

The action at Arogyi merits specially to be remembered as the first in which the Snider rifle was used.

King Theodore, when he beheld the destruction of his army, sank into despair. His power was gone—nothing remained but submission; and he despatched two of his captives, Lieutenant Prideaux and Mr Flud, next morning, to Napier's camp, expressing his earnest desire to be reconciled to the British. But such reconciliation was impossible. British honour, to be sure, might have been satisfied with the liberation of the prisoners, and due reparation for the indignities they had sustained. But the Abyssinians had warmly welcomed the invaders, had freely supplied and assisted them throughout the campaign, and it would be impossible to abandon them to the mercies of a pitiless

tyrant. Unconditional surrender, therefore, was the only terms which Sir Robert Napier could impose and accept.

The following written reply was sent back through the prisoners, Prideaux and Flud: 'Your Majesty has fought like a brave man, and has been overcome by the superior power of the British army. It is my desire that no more blood may be shed. If, therefore, your Majesty will submit to the Queen of England, and bring all the Europeans now in your Majesty's hands, and deliver them safely this day in the British camp, I guarantee honourable treatment for yourself and all the members of your Majesty's family.'

Soon afterwards the two prisoners returned with a remarkable document which Theodore had personally dictated to his secretary. As he had resolved to put an end to himself, rather than survive the loss of power and undergo the degradation of captivity, this final manifesto may be regarded as the sincere expression of his inner thoughts. In the immediate presence of death he had no motive for attempting to deceive. Its elevation of tone is characteristic of this strange man, who blended in his nature so much that was heroic and noble with so much that was barbarous; and there is a chivalry in it not unworthy of the old Crusaders. It ran thus:—

'In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one Lord.

'Kasa, whose trust is in Christ, thus speaks:

'O people of Abyssinia! will it always be thus that you flee before the enemy when I myself, by the power of God, go out forth with you to encourage you?

'Believing that all power had been given to me, I had established my Christian people in this heathen spot. In my city are multitudes whom I had fed—maidens protected and maidens unprotected; women whom yesterday made widows, and aged parents who have no children. God has given you the power. See that you forsake not these people. It is a heathen land.

'My countrymen have turned their backs on me and have hated me, because I imposed tribute on them, and sought to bring them under military discipline. You have prevailed against me by means of people brought into a state of discipline.

'My followers, who loved me, were frightened by one bullet, and fled in spite of my commands. When you defeated them I was not with the fugitives.

'Believing myself to be a great lord, I gave you battle; but, by reason of the worthlessness of my artillery, all my pains were as nought.

'The people of my country, by taunting me with having embraced the religion of the Franks, and by saying that I had become a Mussulman, and in ten different ways, had provoked me to anger them. Out of what I have done of evil towards them may God bring good. His will be done. I had intended, if God had so decreed, to conquer the whole world; and it was my desire to die if my purpose could not be fulfilled. Since the day of my birth till now no man has dared to lay hands on me. Whenever my soldiers began to waver in battle, it was mine to arise and rally them. Last night the darkness hindered me from doing so.

'You people, who have passed the night in joy, may God do unto you as He has done to me. I had hoped, after subduing all my enemies in Abyssinia, to lead my army against Jerusalem, and expel from it the Turks. A warrior who has dandled strong men in his arms like infants will never suffer himself to be dandled in the arms of others.'

After the two prisoners had departed with this strange message or manifesto, Theodore sat silent and alone for some time beneath the blue sky,—his people watching him from a distance. Then he prayed, bowed his face thrice to the ground, and drank some water. Suddenly he pulled a pistol from his belt, and put it to his mouth; but before he could pull the trigger, his soldiers ran up, clasped him round the waist, and pulled back his arm. In the struggle the pistol went off, and a bullet grazed the King's ear. Having waved aside his followers, he speedily recovered his composure, and for a while renounced the thought of self-destruction, declaring that it was not God's will. Having resolved to live he had an interview with his wife, whom he had recently treated with neglect, and afterwards formed the hope of obtaining moderate terms from the British general by releasing his prisoners. Some of his chiefs counselled him to slay them and fight to the last; but he rejected this truculent advice, and sent the prisoners—to their great wonderment and indescribable joy—down to the British camp, accompanied by four of his German workmen. There were Consul Cameron, broken down by four years of miserable captivity; Mr Rassam, Dr Blanc, and Lieutenant Prideaux; Mr Stein, the missionary; Mr Flud; Mr and Mrs Rosenthal; young Kerans, and Pietro, an Italian.

Theodore still detained five Europeans who had attempted to escape, Mrs Flud and her children, and some others.

On Sunday morning he sent another letter to the British general. It is interesting enough to merit transcription:—

‘In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one Lord.

‘The King of Kings Teodoros :

‘May it reach the beloved servant of the great Queen of England.

‘I am writing to you, without being able to address you by name, because our intercourse has arisen so unexpectedly.

‘I am grieved at having sent you my writing of yesterday, and at having quarrelled with you, my friend. When I saw your manner of fighting, and the discipline of your army, and when my people failed to execute my orders, then I was consumed with sorrow to think that, although I killed and punished my soldiers, yet they would not return to the battle. Whilst the fire of jealousy burned within me, Satan came to me in the night, and tempted me to kill myself with my own pistol. But reflecting that God would be angry with me if I were to go in this manner, and leave my army without a protector, I sent to you in a hurry, lest I might die, and all things be in confusion before my message should reach you. After my messenger had gone, I cocked my pistol, and, putting it in my mouth, pulled the trigger. Though I pulled and pulled, yet it would not go off. But when my people rushed upon me, and laid hold of the pistol, it was discharged just as they had drawn it from my mouth. God having thus signified to me that I should not die, but live, I sent to you Mr Rassam that same evening, that your heart might be made easy.

‘To-day being Easter, I hope I may send 1000 cows and 500 sheep as a breakfast for the troops.

‘The reason of my returning to you your letter yesterday, was that I believed at that time we should meet one another in heaven, but never on earth. . . .

‘You require from me all the Europeans, even to my best friend Waldmeier. Well, be it so. They shall go. But now that we are friends you must not leave me without artisans, as I am a lover of the mechanical arts.’

The acceptance of this present would, according to the Eastern custom, have been an overture of peace. Some confusion arose as to the answer which Napier desired to send, and at first Theodore was led to believe that the present would be received. Such, however, was not the British general’s intention, and when the animals reached the British lines, they were immediately sent back. Meanwhile, Theodore had released every one of his prisoners, and restored to them all their property, keeping nothing—not a

hostage, not a child, not a box. He was rejoicing in his improved prospects, and it was not until the evening, when he found that the cows had not been admitted into the camp, that he perceived the hopelessness of his position, and sank into despair—passing the night on the lonely hills with the cloud of his fate impending heavily over him.

Rising at dawn, he addressed his people:—‘Warriors who love me, arm yourselves, leave everything behind and follow me. The time has come for us to seek another home.’ Repairing to Islamgyè, near the ascent to Magdala, he told his soldiers that all who were not ready to brave the worst with their King, might save themselves. They immediately dispersed, and stood about in small groups, or singly on the Selassyè peak, while Theodore, with a few faithful chiefs and followers, remained upon Islamgyè. Observing, about nine in the morning, a dark halo round the sun, he remarked that it was an omen of bloodshed.

Let us turn our attention now to the movements of the British army. It was Easter Monday, and in the forenoon, the two brigades marched up the steep ascent to the saddle-backed ridge between Fala and Islamgyè. The Indian troops occupied the Fala plateau, and the British the height of Selassyè, no opposition being attempted. All the natives who were armed were made to lay down their guns, spears, and shields in heaps, over which sentries were placed. It was known by this time that the King had retired to Magdala, and Sir Robert Napier therefore ordered that all the guns which had been brought up should open fire on the fortress gate. The first shot was discharged at three minutes to two. A couple of hours later, a storming party, consisting of the 33rd Regiment, the 10th company of Royal Engineers, and a company of Madras sappers, was ordered to advance. Through a heavy storm of thunder and rain, the men sprang lightly up the narrow rocky path which wound in the shadow of black cliffs of basalt, to the plateau on which Magdala was built. It led in the first

place to a roofed stone gateway, fifteen feet deep, with folding wooden doors, called the *koket-bir*. On either side the approach was defended by a thick hedge with stakes. Within the *koket-bir* was a rapid ascent of seventy feet to a second hedge on the summit of the plateau; and another narrow path crossed the rocks to a second gate which opened on the crest of the ridge. The long line of red coats as it swiftly advanced maintained a rapid fire with their Sniders on the hedge above them, and on the *koket-bir*, whence a feeble dropping fire was returned, by which seven of our men were wounded. On reaching the doors it was found that the powder-bags and axes had been forgotten, and as they were barricaded with large stones in the rear, it was impossible to force them. The 33rd, therefore, dashed at the hedge, clambered across it, and opened the doors from inside to their comrades. But where was the enemy? One aged chief was killed as the soldiers entered. Three others, dead or dying, lay in a heap just inside the gate. On through the second gate swept our excited soldiery, and at a quarter-past four the British flag, streaming from the topmost point, announced that Magdala had fallen.

The King and his few followers, on the approach of the dreaded redcoats, escaped through the second gateway. Theodore was the last in the retreat. He raised his arms in the air defiantly from behind the last rock; his position being such that, from below, he looked as 'if he were in a pulpit.' Several of his chiefs were wounded, and Theodore retired yet a little further—some fifty yards—before he dismissed the survivors, except his faithful valet, bidding them make haste to save themselves. 'Flee,' he said; 'I release you from your allegiance; as for me, I shall never fall into the hands of the enemy.' As soon as they were gone he turned to his servant with the words, 'It is finished! Sooner than fall into their hands, I will kill myself.' Placing a pistol in his mouth, he fired it, and fell dead; the

bullet passing through the roof of his mouth and out at the back of his head.

A few minutes afterwards, as Sir Charles Staveley passed through the second gate, a man informed him that, according to the evidence of the prisoners, a dead body lying near was the King's. It was put into a litter, and brought to Sir Charles; the prisoners examined it, and with one voice exclaimed: 'Teódoros!' At the sound of this well-known name everybody hastened to the spot.

And what did they see? The body of a native, excessively emaciated, clad in coarse and dingy garments. It was that of a man of medium stature, well built, with broad chest, small waist, and strong muscular limbs. The hair, much dishevelled, crisp, and coarse, was divided into three large plaits, extending from the forehead to the back of the neck. The face was of deep brown, and furrowed or seamed with the lines of anxiety and thought. The eyebrows had a peculiar curve downwards and over the nose; they were black and bushy. The nose was high, aquiline, and finely cut, and a strong line on either side reached from the nostril to the mouth, which was thin-lipped, and wore a cruel expression. The forehead was high and prominent—the whole expression one of power. Such was Theodore, King of Abyssinia, one of the most remarkable men whom Africa has produced. He was a tyrant, but not without many noble qualities; cruel, yet capable of flashes of generous humanity. His conquerors respected his character and position, and caused him to be interred, with due ceremony, in a grave in the outer cloister of the Christian Church.

Arrangements were then made for preserving the peace of the district. Theodore's chiefs were dismissed to their homes; the numerous political prisoners were released from their fetters: and the thirty thousand inhabitants of Magdala, including soldiers and camp-followers, returned to their native provinces, escorted through the hostile Galla country, as far as Wadda, by British troops. The

fortifications of Magdala were razed to the ground, its cannon destroyed, and its buildings given to the flames. On the 18th of April the British force re-crossed the Beshilo, and on the 20th a grand review was held on the Dalanta plateau. In the afternoon the plunder brought from Magdala was sold for the benefit of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers. The march to the coast was then resumed in three divisions, the rear of which arrived at Dildee on the 29th. No incidents of importance occurred, the road having been improved and rendered easy by the troops left to guard the line of communication. The last column of the Expeditionary Force passed the Sovroo defile and encamped at Komayli on the 1st of June, and before the month was out the last English soldier had departed from Annesley Bay. Thus ended the Abyssinian Expedition, which, from most points of view, the reader may regard with satisfaction. 'The cause of quarrel was absolutely just; the main objects for which the expedition was undertaken were secured, and public opinion was still sufficiently alive to the honour of England to approve the addition of a penny to the Income Tax to maintain it. The experience acquired, during active service, by many young officers was a clear gain to the country; and, in traversing a very interesting and remarkable region, some additional knowledge was collected, by those who were specially sent out for the purpose, in several branches of science.'

AUTHORITIES.—'Blue Book on Abyssinian Expedition'; 'Annual Register'; C. R. Markham, 'History of the Abyssinian Expedition'; G. A. Henty, 'The March to Magdala'; H. M. Stanley, 'Coomassie and Magdala.'

Note

The actual strength of the Expeditionary Force landed at Annesley Bay was:—

Troops		Animals	
Officers . . .	520	Horses . . .	2,538
European Troops .	4,250	Elephants . .	44
Native Troops .	9,447	Mules . . .	16,022
Followers . . .	26,214	Ponies . . .	1,651
Civilians . . .	433	Camels . . .	4,735
Women Followers .	140	Donkeys . . .	1,759
	<hr/>	Bullocks . . .	7,071
	41,004	Sheep . . .	12,839
			<hr/>

The casualties were, 11 officers and 37 men killed.

CHAPTER VI

THE ASHANTEE EXPEDITION

THE cruelties perpetrated by the so-called King of Ashantee, and his encroachments upon those portions of the littoral of West Africa which had been taken under British protection, determined the Government of England to despatch an expedition for his punishment in 1873. In previous Ashantee wars our experiences had been unfortunate. In 1823 Sir Charles McCarthy and six hundred British troops had been swept away by the furious rush of the Ashantee hordes; and it was long reported that the brave officer's skull, rimmed with gold, was used as a drinking cup by King Coffee, in his palace at Coomassie. In 1863-4, a small force under Couran marched to the Peak, eighty miles inland, and marched back again, suffering severe loss, and after having been compelled to bury or destroy their guns, retiring hastily to Cape Coast. These were evil omens: but it was known that the new expedition was in charge of a commander of proved ability, who happily combined discretion with daring, whose plans were as carefully matured

as they were energetically carried out,—and it was anticipated with just confidence that under such guidance it would march to assured victory.

The little army with which Sir Garnet Wolseley advanced upon Coomassie, the Ashantee capital,—after a brief but sharp engagement in the jungle at Abracampa, where a brilliant success greatly raised the spirits of his soldiers,—consisted of about 4000 men: namely, three battalions of the line, one battalion of marines and sailors, one battery of artillery, one company of Royal Engineers, two battalions of West Indians, one battalion of Houssas, and two battalions of Native Allies. His staff included Major Baker, Captain Brackenbury, Captain Charteris, Captain Butler (author of 'The Great Lone Land'), and Lieutenant Maurice; and among his regimental officers were Colonels M'Leod, Home, Evelyn Wood, and Baker Russell—men of experience and capacity, who have since made their names famous on many a field. On the 8th of January, 1874, Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived at Prahsu, whence, to Coomassie, the distance was about seventy-eight miles. After collecting stores, and negotiating ineffectually with King Coffee, he pushed forward into the interior. He had already done a good deal of useful and necessary, but unostentatious work,—the kind of work which the public 'at home' knows so little how to appreciate, its attention being impressed only by the picturesque details of great battles. When Wolseley landed at Cape Coast Castle, with a retinue of about thirty 'special service' officers, he found the enemy swarming over the tract of forest and jungle that lies between the Prah river and the sea. They hung like a threatening cloud within a few miles of his front; to his right and left they occupied every inch of ground outside the forts. With his Special Service corps he soon effected a complete change in the condition of affairs. First, he introduced a certain amount of order and discipline among the Fantees, our native allies: second, he established his

influence over the friendly chiefs, and secured their obedience to his directions : third, he organised new regiments under European officers ; fourth, he collected intelligence as to the numbers and intentions of the enemy ; fifth, he 'worried' and 'pounded' that enemy with incessant activity, harassing them front and rear from all points, and proving to them in this energetic manner that a new and strange force of which they had never before known, was now opposed to them 'to the death.' The result was, that a host of Ashantees, variously estimated at from 20,000 to 40,000, were driven in hurried flight across the Prah, between the 1st of October and the 13th of December, 1873. And thus it came to pass that, on the 20th of January, 1874, Sir Garnet's little army was in full march for the enemy's capital.

That the Ashantees could withstand a British force, well armed and disciplined, in the open field, was hardly to be expected, though their numerical preponderance was a factor not to be ignored by any prudent commander. But Wolseley's principal difficulties necessarily arose from the unhealthiness of the climate, and the nature of the country through which lay his route of march. The former he endeavoured to guard against by the most stringent sanitary regulations ; the latter, by a careful survey of the ground, and the establishment of military posts to guard his line of communications. The character of the scenery which greeted the advancing army we learn from Mr Stanley's descriptions. He speaks of the impenetrable shade of the cotton woods, of teak and mighty tamarinds, with the insatiable jungle clustering thickly round their girths, and defying the keenest eyesight. 'Though we saw nought below the dense shadows which the thick foliage of the forest formed, above our heads, far, far, above, the colours and tints of the leaves were discovered to be of an agreeable variety as the twigs and branches bent and nestled before the gales. Intermittent gusts of wind sometimes swept down on us, and caused us gratefully to

doff our hats to enjoy the cooling draughts; nature, ever grave and sombre in the forest shade, relaxed nothing of its sullen, lifeless aspect.

'Mile after mile was passed of this forest. Sometimes the eye caught glimpses of broad-fronded plantain stalks, or the tall feathery palm, or the slender parasitical rattan, or a huge bough—like a monster serpent—of a gigantic Eliane, swinging in mid-air, from tree to tree, which served to relieve somewhat the dead monotony of the march.'

In due time the army reached the Adansi hills, and climbed to the summit, 1500 feet above the sea-level. Here the rolling landscape could effectively be surveyed by any lover of the picturesque, though probably most of the 'white men' who looked down upon it examined its details exclusively from a military point of view.

'Each hill,' says the observer, 'is wooded, each dip and depression of land is wooded, high land and low land; far and near, north and south, east and west, everywhere the forest land of Ashantee, north of the Adansi hills, heaves and rolls, wave after wave, varicoloured and uneven, now a ridge, then a hollow. South it bears the same aspect; west it is a line of peaks; east it is alike. At our feet, that contiguous to us presents us with a beautiful play and mixture of colours—the mixture of the sere with the green, and the rich autumn hue with the spring. There are terraces of tamarinds, great wide-spreading branches like parachutes, globes of silk cotton with pale green leaves, round uprising towers of teak leafage, flat extents of ordinary vegetation, deep hollows, which plantains and palm-fronds combine to fill, until the eye tracing the variety and form of the foliage insensibly is carried away to where the colour of the vegetation is lost amidst purple haze and blue ether.'

'Leaving the peak we were soon concerned in the necessity of restraining the impetuosity which the steepness of the descent induced. It was almost a continual

slide down hill; our strides were lengthened to an incredible distance.

‘As we descended we were sensible that the delicious freshness of the air we breathed on the summit of the hill, laden with the fragrance of tender leaflets and buds, and sapful twigs, and young verdure of the topmost forest boughs, had left us, and that we were breathing the heavy, infragrant air, circulating languidly between the massive stems and forest colonnades.’

The advance of the army was made in four columns: one on the right, under Captain Glover, consisting of 750 Houssas and Yombas; a second column, right centre, under Captain Butler; the third and main column, under Sir Garnet Wolseley himself; and the fourth column, on the left, under Captain Dalrymple. Sir Garnet reached Quarman on the 30th. On the previous day a portion of his force had had a smart action with the enemy at Borborassi, which had demonstrated their hopeless inferiority. The following is the account given of it by the officer in command, Colonel M’Leod, of the 42nd Highlanders:—

‘In compliance with the instructions received, I marched with a force to reconnoitre the village of Borborassi, situated on our left flank, and said to contain a large body of the enemy under Essamanquatia and other Ashantee chiefs. Striking into the bush-path at 8.15 P.M., we marched W.S.W., and at 11 A.M., arrived before the place, taking it quite by surprise. The Ashantees, driven out of the village by our advance, took to the bush on all sides; a party of them came back upon our left flank, and fired on the Naval Brigade. This attack was brushed away with a few rounds of ammunition. The village was immediately in our possession, but not without loss on our side [three killed and seven wounded].

‘Captain Nicol, commanding the Annamaber Company of Russell’s Regiment, was killed leading his men, with the devotion of an English gentleman, round the right flank

of the village. I estimated the killed of the enemy at fifty. Fifty-three Ashantee muskets were collected. Twelve kegs of powder, and the umbrella of Essamanquatia, were found in the village. It seems this old chief ran away just before the attack, and so narrowly escaped capture. The troops after their long march were halted in the village for one hour, and refreshed themselves from their havresacks before commencing their return march. On our return the blue-jackets formed the rear-guard. Before quitting the village they broke up the arms which were taken, and blew up the powder. As soon as ever the Ashantees, lying *perdu* in the bush, discovered that we had gone, they returned to the village with shouting and blowing of horns. Presently a body of them came down upon the rear guard and opened fire; the blue-jackets calmly faced about, and poured amongst them such a fire of Snider bullets as sufficed to rid us of their presence for the rest of the day. The troops arrived at their camp at Kiang Boasuu at four in the morning.'

The Engineers clearing away the jungle, and preparing roads for their march, the British soldiers advanced upon Amoafu, where the enemy were posted in great numbers to defend their capital. Here took place the decisive action of the campaign on the 31st of January.

On this occasion the army was again disposed in four columns. The advance guard consisted of the 42nd, with a detachment of the Houssa artillery, two 7-pound guns, and a detachment of Royal Engineers, under Brigadier-General Sir Archibald Alison, Bt. Next came the left column, under Colonel M'Leod, composed of the right wing of the Naval Brigade, Major Baker Russell's native regiment, Rait's artillery, two rocket detachments, and a detachment of Royal Engineers. Colonel Evelyn Wood was in command of the right column, which included his native regiment, the left wing of the Naval Brigade, a detachment of Rait's Houssa artillery, two rockets, and a detachment of the

Royal Engineers. The rear consisted of the second battalion of the Rifle Brigade, under Lieutenant-Colonel Warren. The total fighting strength exceeded 2500 men, Europeans and natives. The Commander accompanied the right column, seated in 'a Madeira cane chair,' which was carried on the shoulders of four burly and semi-nude Fantees, a conspicuous object for a lurking enemy in the bush.

At about 8.5. A.M., Lord Gifford's scouts, who preceded the advance, came in touch of the enemy, and opened fire. About ten minutes later the Highlanders took up the game, and the firing grew louder and more sustained. The right column did not get into action until half-past eleven, when the Ashantees bore down upon it in force, pouring in a hail of slugs, which caused the trees around and the branches above them to shed their leaves as thick as flakes in a snow storm. The attack was made with great courage, and in such force that the British had much ado to hold their ground, until the Welsh Fusiliers were ordered up to their support. Two companies of the Rifle Brigade were afterwards thrown forward, and ordered to drive the foe from the covert to which he clung so desperately. Meanwhile, the left and rear columns were closely engaged, and the battle raged all along the line until a quarter to two, when the powerful weapons and solid discipline of the white men prevailed, and the enemy sullenly ceased firing.

The strife, however, was not wholly ended; for near Quarman, about three o'clock, Essamanquatia, the ablest of the Ashantee chiefs, brought up a reinforcement, which was gallantly opposed by a detachment of the 2nd West Indians, until the Rifles came to their assistance. Baffled at this point the Ashantees made an attack at Eusarpe, two miles-and-a-half beyond Quarman, but though they persisted until midnight, they experienced nothing but repeated reverses. At three o'clock next morning they made a second attempt against Quarman; this too failed, and after twenty hours of almost continuous fighting, they fled

from the field, which was strewn with their killed and wounded.

The following is Sir Garnet Wolseley's account of the battle :—

‘My whole force, divided into four columns, advanced along the main road, preceded by the scouts, until the enemy were met at the village of Egginassie, which was carried by a rush of the scouts at about 8 A.M. The front columns then extended into the thick bush on each side of the road, which was cut and widened by labourers under the Royal Engineers so as to admit of the advance of the guns.

‘As the leading column advanced northward the left column, according to orders previously issued, cut a path diagonally to the left front, with a view of protecting the left flank of the front column; and as it moved along this path, the right column, closing up, cut a path diagonally to the right to protect the right flank, while the rear column extended, so as to gain touch of the right and left columns, which were designed to follow the flanks of the front column, and, should it be unflanked, to face east and west outwards. My intention was to fight in the form of a square, and so oppose the invariable flanking tactics of the enemy, which their superior numbers would probably allow them to carry out against any line which I could form.

‘The front column, under Sir A. Alison, found the enemy in great force, beyond a swampy stream to the north of Egginassie, and suffered heavily in dislodging them. They were driven out by the steady advance of the infantry, aided by the fire of Rait's guns. The large numbers of dead Ashantees at this part of their field, and the numbers of the 42nd Highlanders here wounded, showed the stubborn resistance made by the enemy. The 42nd Highlanders finally advanced and captured the town of Amoafu about noon, after being more than four hours in action.

‘Meanwhile, the left column advancing under a heavy fire,

by which Captain Buckle, R.E., was killed while urging on his labourers, occupied the crest of a hill, where a clearing was made, and the enemy driven away from this portion of their camp by an advance of the Naval Brigade and Russell's regiment. Colonel M'Leod having cleared his front, and having lost touch of the left column, now cut his way in a north-easterly direction, and came into the main road in rear of the Highlanders, about the same hour that the advance occupied Amoaful. I protected his left rear by a detachment of the Rifle Brigade. Our left flank was now apparently clear of the enemy.

'On the right, Lieut.-Col. Wood was met by a fire which prevented the advance of his column for more than a short distance into the bush, consequently when the front column took Amoaful it would have become detached from the right column, but that communication was kept up along the main road by two companies of the 42nd, the head quarters and detachment 23rd, and a company of the Rifle Brigade. Long after Amoaful was taken, the Ashantees kept up a heavy fire on the right of the main road, and these troops lay down and replied to it, repelling the enemy, but not without loss.

'Up to 1.30 P.M. the enemy kept up a very heavy fire on Lieut.-Col. Wood's column, whose right was extended into the bush, east of the village of Egginassie. But they made no progress, and soon after half-past one an advance of the Kossors and Bonny men of Wood's regiment drove them away, clearing the flank of the Naval Brigade, and enabling them to complete the discomfiture of the enemy on this flank. By 1.45 P.M., firing had ceased.

'At this time heavy firing was heard in rear, and I learnt that another body of the enemy had attacked my entrenched post at Quarman. I sent back part of the Rifle Brigade; but the attack was continued till nightfall, though of course repulsed. Shortly before dark a large convoy of baggage which had been parked at Eusarpe during the

action, and was now ordered on, was fired upon, though accompanied by a large escort. A number of their carriers threw down their loads and ran away, and had it not been for the great exertions of Lieut.-Col. Colley, whom I have placed in charge of my line of communications, and who recovered much of the baggage during the night, more serious consequences might have ensued than the loss of the few loads which occurred. On learning of this affair I took immediate steps for clearing my line of communications, and brought in large convoys this morning in perfect safety to Amoafu. The officers commanding the columns as above-named performed their difficult tasks most excellently, and were efficiently aided by their staff.'

The number of Ashantees engaged has been estimated at 12,000: and their loss in killed and wounded must have exceeded 2000.

On the following day, February 1st, Wolseley pushed forward his advanced guard, which attacked and carried the town of Becquah, and burned it to the ground. On the 2nd, the march towards Coomassie was resumed. The enemy formed occasional ambuscades, from which they were invariably driven with considerable loss; and the passage of the river Ordah having successfully been effected, Wolseley sent the Highlanders to attack Coomassie. They carried village after village—Ordahou, Eusiaya, Karsi—King Coffee flying before them—and on the evening of the 4th of February, entered the Ashantee capital in triumph.

Coomassie is described as upwards of three miles-and-a-half in circuit. It covers the summit of a low rocky eminence, thence descends into a valley, and also occupies a portion of the hill contiguous. The main street or avenue is seventy yards wide, and probably a mile-and-a-half in length. The houses are wattled structures, with alcoves and stuccoed facades, embellished with Mauresque patterns. The lower part, reaching up to the floor of the said alcoves, is painted an ockrish-red, the upper part white. In the

rear are grouped the huts of the domestics, enclosing small courtyards, which are connected with one another by small alleys lined with closets and store-rooms.

The main street leads to the death-grove, or place of execution, which, in all accounts of the Ashantee Kingdom, occupies so conspicuous a position. There the British soldiers stood aghast at the terrible spectacle of thirty or forty decapitated bodies in the last stages of corruption, and countless skulls, lying piled in heaps and scattered over a wide area. M. Bonat, who was for some years a prisoner in Coomassie, tells us that he has seen some two or three hundred slaves slain at one time, as customary after the death of the King's sister; and as many as a dozen slaves dragged to the grove, and executed in the most barbarous manner, on any ordinary occasion. If it be true that about a thousand slaves, offenders, rebels, and others are put to death annually, we may form a tolerably accurate conjecture of the number of victims which have helped to swell the terrible death-roll of the Coomassie Golgotha since the time of Sy Tutu, the founder of the present dynasty, in the middle of the eighteenth century. It may safely be computed that the sanguinary 'custom' of the Ashantee Kingdom has cost the lives of between 130,000 and 140,000 victims.

The palace of King Coffee Calcali was situated about three hundred yards from the death-grove, and occupied a level space in the valley, or depression, between the two eminences already spoken of. It consisted of a number of houses with steep thatched roofs, clustered together, and enclosed by a palisade of split bamboo stakes, the area included being about 400 or 500 feet square. At one corner of the enclosure rose a square two-storied stone building. In the first court the lower part of the lofty stucco walls was painted red, the upper part white. They were ornamented with bold designs, diamond-shaped, scroll-work done in alto-relievo. The columns were square, with simple

pediments and capitals. The alcoves were spacious, probably 14 feet long by 8 feet deep. Other courts were after the same style; but in some the columns were circular and smooth, in others carved.

The alcoves were littered with curious articles. One contained a large number of war-drums, blood-bespotted, and decorated with ghastly trophies of wars and triumphs, with human skulls. Another contained a heap of cutlasses, rusty sabres without scabbards, accoutrements plated with gold, old worn-out guns with bands of silver or gold, horn-tails, and crisps of elephant tails, and numerous ivory war-horns, each with its human jaw-bone; while in another were scores of tall umbrellas,—silk, satin, velvet, crimson-damask, and woollen-cloth, bespangled with bits of gold and silver, or fringed with small gold, silver, and brass bells.

In the stone building which formed the King's private residence, the interior court and the adjacent rooms were filled with articles of a curious character but small value, while the booty in the upper story, though excessively miscellaneous, was of considerable worth. It included . . . a silver breakfast and dinner service; Bohemian vases; large glass goblets; strings of the valuable Agjey beads; piles of faded Kidderminster carpets; Persian rugs; leopard skins; European drums and swords; Arab zataghans and scimitars; gold and silver-headed canes; royal stools, beautifully carved and ornamented with gold and silver; seven gold masks, each weighing several ounces; golden toys; damask bed-curtains and counterpanes; enormous silken umbrellas; tankards and cups of silver; gold decorated muskets, etc.

The final stage of the Ashantee campaign may best be described in the words of the leader of the British expedition. This dispatch to the Secretary of State is dated February 7; from Camp Agimamu, he says:—

‘On the 3rd instant, I forwarded a flying column, taking with me five days’ provisions, and marched upon Coomassie.

The enemy's resistance on the 3rd was considerable, very large numbers being in our front. I halted on the river Ordah.

'During the course of the day's march, I received from the King a letter, of which I enclose a copy, and returned at once the enclosed reply.'

These enclosures, we omit, as of no special importance.

'On the 4th I advanced again at daybreak. The enemy had occupied a position of considerable strength near the village of Ordahore. This they held against us from about seven till a quarter to two, when they yielded, and, on my advance guard, under Colonel M'Leod, being pushed on against them, broke and fled in all directions, leaving behind, strewed along the road, the chief's umbrellas and chairs, etc., and the food which had been carried with the army.

'No opposition was offered to our entry into the town.

'I immediately issued stringent orders for the protection of the inhabitants and the safety of the town. But night fell almost immediately after our entry, and in the darkness it was impossible to prevent some of the numerous camp followers from pillaging. The Fantee prisoners had also been released, and, in all probability, were largely engaged in the same pursuit. The result was the outbreak of many fires. The Inspector-General of the Police, and several officers, were engaged nearly all night in the suppression of the pillaging and in putting out the fires. One policeman taken in the act was hung.

'I endeavoured immediately on my arrival to communicate with the King through every channel that appeared to offer an opportunity. A chief having come into Coomassie, who was said to be sent by the King, I saw him myself, and impressed upon him my wish to spare the town, and my desire to impose on the King no severer conditions than those he had already accepted.

'Moreover, I told this man that, now that I had shown the power of England, I was ready, if the King would

make peace at once, to accept a small indemnity, and not to exact the half I had previously required to be paid in ready money.

‘Other messengers were obtained, who undertook to reach the King. . . All was, however, of no avail. The men whom I endeavoured to employ as messengers, and who came avowedly as envoys of the King, were found treacherously removing powder and gold dust from the houses.

‘The whole scheme of Ashantee politics is so based upon treachery that the King does not either understand any other form of mystification, or believe it possible that others can have honest intentions. Under these circumstances it became clear that a treaty would be as valueless to us as it was difficult to obtain.

‘Nothing remained but to leave such a mark of our power to punish, as should deter from future aggression a nation whom treaties do not bind.

‘I had done all I could to avoid the necessity, but it was forced upon me. I gave orders for the destruction of the palace and the burning of the city. I had at one time also contemplated the destruction of the Bantamah, where the sacred ashes of former kings are entombed, but this would have involved a delay of some hours. Very heavy rain had fallen. I found that the streams might have risen in my rear sufficiently to seriously delay my march. I considered it better, therefore, not to risk further the health of the troops, the wet weather having already threatened seriously to affect it.

‘The demolition of the palace was complete. From all that I can gather, I believe, that the result will be such a diminution in the prestige and military power of the Ashantee monarch as may result in the break-up of the kingdom altogether. This I had been anxious to avoid, because it seems impossible to foresee what power can take this nation's place among the feeble races of this coast. I certainly believe that your Lordship may be well convinced

that no more utterly atrocious Government than that which has thus, perhaps, fallen, ever existed on the face of the earth. Their capital was a charnel-house; their religion a combination of cruelty and treachery; their policy the natural outcome of their religion. I cannot think that, whatever may be the final fate of the people of this country, the absolute annihilation of such a rule, should it occur, would be a subject for unmixed regret.

‘In any case, my Lord, I believe that the main object of my expedition has been perfectly secured. The territories of the Gold Coast will not again be troubled by the warlike ambition of this restless power. I may add that the flag of England from this moment will be received throughout Western Africa with respectful awe—a treatment which has been of late years by no means its invariable fortune.

‘The troops are now on the march homewards, and will embark for England immediately on reaching Cape Coast.’

Before they marched, however, the Ashantee monarch came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour, and re-opened negotiations with Sir Garnet Wolseley for the conclusion of a treaty of peace. At Fornannah, on the 13th of February, the treaty was signed; and King Coffee Calcali undertook to pay by instalments the sum of 50,000 ounces of approved gold as indemnity for the expenses incurred by Britain in the war. He also guaranteed freedom of trade between Ashantee and the British settlements on the coast; and, in order to prove the sincerity of his friendship for Queen Victoria, promised to use his best endeavours to check the practice of human sacrifice, with a view to hereinafter putting an end to it altogether, ‘as the practice is repugnant to the feelings of all Christian nations.’

The troops had all reached the coast by the 22nd of February, and were embarked as rapidly as possible on board the splendid steamships which awaited their arrival. Thus ended an expedition which the military historian will

always mention with favour, on account of the skill with which it was conducted, and the rapidity and completeness with which it attained its object.

AUTHORITIES :—‘London Gazette,’ 1874 ; Contemporary Newspapers ; ‘Coomassie and Magdala,’ by H. M. Stanley ; ‘The March to Coomassie,’ 1876, by G. A. Henty ; ‘Life of Lord Wolseley,’ by C. R. Low ; ‘Ashantee and the Gold Coast,’ by Sir John D. Hay.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

THE axiom that History repeats itself, finds a striking illustration in the second Afghan War, which, in its cause and many of its incidents, was a repetition of the first. There had been misunderstandings between England and Russia—misunderstandings which approached the brink of war—and while these existed, Russia would seem to have sent an envoy to Shere Ali, then Ameer of Afghanistan, with the view of securing his alliance. When this became known to the English Government, Lord Lytton, the Indian Viceroy, in order to guard against future danger, resolved on establishing a paramount influence in Afghanistan. He entered into communication with the Ameer, reminding him that as between England and Russia his small kingdom was like the earthen pipkin between the two pots of iron, and pressing upon him the reception of a mission and of a permanent envoy or Resident at Cabul. The Ameer, desirous of preserving his independence, strongly objected, but Lord Lytton persisted in sending forward his mission, and with an escort so large that it almost resembled an army. It started from Peshawar on the 21st of September, 1878,

but was stopped on the frontier by Shere Ali's officer, who pleaded that he had received no authority from his sovereign to permit its advance. His action was not unreasonable; but Lord Lytton construed it to be an insult to the British flag, and sent instructions to his envoy to make his way to Cabul at all hazards. The escort was reinforced, and while one division took possession of Candahar, the other, with but little opposition, marched upon the capital, and occupied it. Shere Ali took to flight; and Lord Beaconsfield was able to announce that the object of the invasion of Afghanistan had been successfully accomplished, and that England commanded the three great highways which connected Afghanistan with India. By the death of Shere Ali, his son, Yakoob Khan, became Ameer; and with him was concluded, on the 5th of May, 1879, the Treaty of Gandamak, by which England undertook to subsidize the Ameer at the rate of £60,000 a year, he agreeing to receive a British Resident at Cabul, and to make certain cessions of territory by which the Indian Government would secure a 'scientific frontier.' So far the success of Lord Beaconsfield's and Lord Lytton's policy appeared to be complete. Sir Louis Cavagnari established himself at Cabul; but scarcely had the dispatches reached England in which he spoke with pride of his peaceful reception, than, just as in 1841, the Afghans rose against the stranger in their midst, and murdered him, with all or nearly all the members of his staff. History unhappily repeated itself. It was absolutely necessary to take vengeance for this massacre, and an army of retribution, under Sir Donald Stewart, entered Afghanistan, and in the teeth of a strenuous resistance, fought its way to Cabul. (December 24, 1879). Yakoob Khan surrendered himself, abdicated, and was sent a prisoner to India, though it is not generally credited that he had any part or complicity in Cavagnari's murder. But though we held Cabul and Candahar, we were far from being masters of Afghanistan. Beyond the

shadow thrown by our bayonets we held not a rood of ground, and exercised no authority. The 'scientific frontier' had not even been laid down, and the Treaty of Gandamak was little better than waste paper.

We had got into Cabul, and now the problem was, how to get out of it. A certain chief, named Mohamed Khan, who had been one of Yakooob's generals, and had numerous partisans among the southern Ghilzais, took up arms against the British, and was soon at the head of a large body of fanatical warriors, with whom he swept down upon Cabul, set up as Ameer, Musa Khan, the young son of the ex-Ameer Yakooob, and had the boldness to advance against the British army in its cantonments at Sherpur. He demanded the immediate release of Yakooob Khan, the surrender of two British officers as hostages until this should be effected, and the immediate retreat of the British. But here, happily, history failed to repeat itself. The British commander was no Elphinstone, and with undaunted resolution he held his ground until reinforcements came up. Mohamed Khan was forced to retire, and the British again entered Cabul.

A second candidate for the Ameership then appeared in Abdurrahman Khan, whose pretensions, it was understood, Russia secretly supported. He was born in 1830—the son of Dost Mohamed's eldest son—was a man of ability and great force of character, and for some years had been living under Russian protection at Samarcand, patiently awaiting his opportunity—in the coming of which he firmly believed—to return to Cabul. Still further to perplex the situation, young Ayoob Khan, a son of Shere Ali, the hero of many an Afghan song and legend, who had long been a guest of the Shah of Persia, raised an army of Heratees, and advanced against Candahar, where we had established a certain Shere Ali Khan as independent Wali. Thus there were three competitors for the Afghan crown; and hostile as these were one against another, they all agreed in hostility to England. It became the object of the Indian

Government to secure the friendship of one of them by offering him its support, and with this view Sir Lepel Griffin, its representative at Cabul, entered into negotiations with Abdurrahman Khan, whose chances of success seemed the likeliest.

But, meanwhile, a terrible disaster had happened to our arms at Candahar, which was garrisoned by a British force under General Primrose. This mud-walled town was bravely held by General Nott against the Afghans in 1842, but it is not a good defensive position, and General Primrose must often have felt anxious for its safety. Nevertheless, it seemed good to the Indian Government that, from his small garrison, he should detach a couple of thousand men, under General Burrows, a brave and able officer, who, however, had had no experience in the field, to oppose the advance of Ayoub Khan. The Afghan pretender, who had been reinforced by some four thousand deserters from the Wali of Candahar's native army, was at the head of 12,000 men, with thirty-six guns. General Burrows, who encountered him on the 27th of July, on the open plain between Maiwand and Kusk-i-Nakhud, mustered scarcely 2500 men, with only twelve guns, and six of these were obsolete 'smooth bores.' He had with him 500 of the 'Old Berkshire' 66th British regiment, and about 1000 Sepoys of the 1st Bombay Grenadiers and the 30th Bombay Native Infantry (Jacob's Rifles); also, 600 sabres (Bombay Cavalry and Scinde Lancers). Unfortunately, the Indian battalions and squadrons were under-officered, and lacked, accordingly, that firmness and cohesion which, in battle, will sometimes compensate for numerical weakness.

It was early in the morning when the battle began, and it lasted until late in the afternoon. The British soldiers fought with a steadiness and a courage worthy of the renown of the British army, and for some time resisted the desperate onset of the Afghans. But the Bombay Sepoys, who knew nothing of warfare, cowered before their resolute

enemy, and fell back in confusion on the 66th. Their panic was shared by the Sepoy horsemen, and the small band of intrepid Englishmen soon found themselves in the midst of a struggling swarm of foes and comrades, from whom the danger was about equal. They obtained shelter behind some mud walls, and again stood up tenaciously against the yelling Ghazis, until their ammunition ran short, and General Burrows gave orders for the retreat to Candahar—a distance of fifty miles. It was the old story over again of the retreat in 1842. The feeble British battalion strove for a time to give order and a semblance of firmness to the march; but the Afghan attack was now more and more hotly pressed, the Indian troops grew more and more discouraged—the retreat became a flight. When the Ghazis abandoned the pursuit and returned to the plunder of Burrows' camp, the Afghan villagers sallied forth with knife or musket, and dealt destruction upon the fugitives. By a deplorable error, the wrong road had been taken, the 'lower' or main road, which, in the months of the Afghan summer, is absolutely without water, and intense thirst was added to the miserable experiences of the routed army. But why dwell upon these sad details? The remnants of the little force reached the banks of the Ayandab, and Burrows rode on to Candahar with his tale of disaster. General Brooke, with some cavalry, was then sent to bring in the survivors, and the Battle of Maiwand was added to the melancholy history of our military experiences in Afghanistan. Let it be understood, however, that it brought no shame or disgrace to the British army, for never had our soldiers borne themselves more bravely than on that unequal field.

To retrieve this disaster, and deliver General Primrose's small garrison from the swarms of Afghans which held it in beleaguerment in Candahar, was an indispensable necessity, in the face of which considerations of caution and prudence had to give way. Sir Donald Stewart and his advisers

determined on a daring *coup*, though not unaware of the dangerous consequences to the British empire in India, which would assuredly supervene upon its failure. With an army of 10,000 men, British, Ghoorkas, and Sikhs, Sir Frederick Roberts suddenly started from Cabul, and undertook a march of three hundred miles through a practically unknown country to Candahar. For three weeks nothing was heard of the bold general and his faithful followers. Then he and they reappeared upon the scene, victorious. With immense skill and resolution Roberts had accomplished his desperate enterprise, had reached Candahar, had fallen like a thunderbolt upon Ayooob Khan, and crushed him. The honour of England was avenged, her prestige saved.

The negotiations with Abdurrahman Khan were brought to a successful conclusion, and he entered into an alliance with the Indian Government to which he has ever since proved most scrupulously faithful. He was recognised as Ameer, and Cabul was given up to him. The British army, under General Stewart, returned to India, and Candahar was soon afterwards evacuated. The advocates of what is or was known as the 'forward policy' were indignant at this evacuation, and insisted that we should have held Candahar as safeguard against a Russian advance upon Herat: but no small number of Englishmen were of opinion that we could hardly hope to secure the friendship and confidence of the Afghans while we occupied one of their most important towns.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AFRICAN CAMPAIGNS

WARS and rumours of wars characterised the last years of the Beaconsfield Ministry ; and our military experiences in Afghanistan found to some extent their parallel in South Africa, where our policy—or want of it—embroiled us in hostilities with the Boers, or Dutch-descended occupants of the Transvaal, and the Zulus, the most powerful and war-like of the South African tribes. The Transvaal Republic, through mal-administration, was involved in 1877 in such grave difficulties that a section of its inhabitants made proposals to England to take it under her protection. Sir Theophilus Shepstone was sent out as Commissioner to ascertain the popular feelings. Unfortunately he suffered himself to be misled by the representations of what afterwards proved to be a small minority ; hoisted the British flag ; and declared the territories of the Republic a portion of the British empire.

Here, for the present, we leave the Transvaal and turn to the Zulus, whose affairs were mixed up with those of the Boers to an extent which, in our narrow limits, it is impossible to define. Cetewayo, the Zulu 'King,' a man of

considerable energy, with natural faculties which fitted him for command, had always been favourably disposed towards the British, until the annexation of the Transvaal led him to apprehend a similar destiny for his own kingdom. He then began to take measures of defence, which Sir Bartle Frere, the Lord High Commissioner,—an English statesman of great ability, but dominated by the ‘imperial instinct,’—construed into offensive measures, and despatched an ultimatum to the Zulu King, insisting on the disbandment of the Zulu army. This was, of course, a declaration of war, and it was supported by the advance of a British army under Lord Chelmsford. It has too often been the fault of British generals to underrate the strength of their enemies and, especially in savage warfare, to believe that British ‘pluck’ can go anywhere and do anything, in this belief dispensing with the most ordinary military precautions, and marching through a hostile country with as absolute a confidence as if they were simply changing quarters in their own. A terrible chastisement now befell this unwise presumption. A division of Lord Chelmsford’s army, halting at Isandlwana, considered it needless to entrench itself—was surprised by a host of Zulus on the 22nd of January, 1879—stricken with panic—and, completely defeated,—we had almost said, destroyed.

This catastrophe produced a great impression on the mind and conscience of England. For a British army to be defeated by a horde of half-naked savages, was a humiliation which Englishmen deeply felt; but probably many felt it all the more deeply from their conviction that the war which had brought it upon them was a war of injustice and oppression. With the political consequences of Isandlwana, we are not, however, concerned. As to its military results, they were unimportant. A struggle between England and the Zulu nation could have but one issue. Lord Chelmsford drew together his forces, and continued his advance, until encountering the Zulus at Ulundi, he inflicted upon them a heavy

defeat, which rendered further resistance on their part impossible. They fought with great bravery, but were powerless to contend against the superior equipment and discipline of the British. Cetewayo was taken prisoner, and the Zulu kingdom fell to pieces.

Our attention may again be directed to the Boers, who, as enemies, were much more formidable than the barbarous Zulus. Against the annexation effected by Sir Theophilus Sheenstone, the majority protested strongly, but in vain. They sent deputations to England, but obtained no satisfaction. At the Cape our representatives emphatically declared that what was done could not be undone, and that the Boers would do well to relinquish all hope of recovering their independence. Sir Bartle Frere, 'as a friend,' advised them not to believe any statements that the English people would give up the Transvaal. Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was sent out to take the chief command, civil and military, in the disturbed provinces of South Eastern Africa, held the same language, proclaiming that 'so long as the sun shines the Transvaal will remain British territory.' But in his dispatches to the home authorities, he admitted that the population of the Transvaal were greatly disaffected to British rule, and might be expected to resort to arms to recover their independence.

They bided their time. No doubt the defeat at Isandlwana gave them encouragement, and in the Zulu campaign they probably observed many signs of the carelessness and inefficiency with which we sometimes make war. Towards the end of 1880, when the Cape Colony was involved in a troublesome contention with the Basutos, they drew the sword. On the 13th of December, they held a mass meeting at Heidelberg, at which they proclaimed the freedom of the Transvaal, re-established the Commonwealth, and formed a triumvirate government, consisting of three remarkable men, John Paul Kruger, Peter Jacob Joubert, and Martin Wessel Pretorius. Two days later, at Potchefstroom, the

first shot was fired, when a large party of armed Boers entered the town to get their proclamation printed. Previous to this, the 94th regiment had marched from Lydenberg to reinforce the garrison of Prætoria, and about the 12th of December reached Middleburgh. Reports of the Boer rising came to hand, and the inhabitants of Middleburgh would fain have kept the troops with them; but Colonel Anstruther, their commander, gave little credence to these reports, and proceeded on the march to Prætoria. He had encamped by the river Oliphants, where fresh information arrived, of a nature to dissipate his incredulity; but he felt persuaded that the force he had with him was adequate to the defeat of any attempt to intercept his march; though, officers and men together, it numbered only 250. Breaking up his camp, he crossed the river, and on the morning of the 20th, suddenly discovered a body of armed Boers posted on the rising ground near the Bronkhorst Spruit.

It was a little after one o'clock, and the long line of waggons was dragging slowly along, while the regimental band played the popular melody, 'Kiss me, mother, kiss your darling.' Before them lay the Hinde river, on the opposite side of which a site had been selected for a camping-ground. Three mounted Boers, one carrying a white flag, came forward rapidly, and one of them handed to Colonel Anstruther a written dispatch, announcing that his further advance would be considered a declaration of war. The colonel replied, as a matter of course, that his orders were to go to Prætoria, and that those orders he should obey. He then returned to his advanced guard, which, with the regimental band, numbered about one hundred and twenty men, the remainder of his little force being distributed as guards along the procession of waggons. An order was immediately given for the right company to extend, but while it was being carried out a heavy fire was poured into their camp, so well-directed that it stretched on the ground one half of the company. The remainder,

and the left company lay down, and returned the volleys of the Boers, who, in a half-moon formation round the head of the little column, assailed it with incessant deadly charges. The struggle was so hopelessly unequal, that, in about twenty minutes, in which time out of 230 men 158 were put *hors de combat*, the colonel ordered his soldiers to cease firing, and surrendered. The Boers, mostly experienced marksmen, were estimated at 500 in number, and had the advantage of position and cover.

The news of the disaster was carried to Prætoria by Mr Egerton, of the Transport Department, and one who was a witness of his arrival, relates some interesting details.*

‘A shapely, well-looking man, whom no one could mistake for anything but a gentleman, he showed me how the weary tramp of forty miles had told upon his feet, which, blistered and in many places absolutely raw, evidenced more than words could possibly do, the endurance that had been exhibited by their possessor in his eleven hours’ march through the previous day and part of the night. He was cool and pleasant in his manner, and said that they (the Boers) managed it beautifully, and had stopped the column near the river, and incapacitated all the officers and most of the non-commissioned ones at the first two or three volleys; that Colonel Anstruther was wounded in five or six places, and seeing the futility of further resistance, he had given the men the order to surrender, after the engagement had lasted some twenty minutes, and more than half the regiment were killed or wounded; that he (Egerton) had obtained permission to go on to Prætoria for medical assistance, and before leaving had managed to fasten the colours of the regiment round his body, and had placed them in the hands of Captain Campbell, the senior captain of the 94th, who with eighty of his men was occupying

* Duval, ‘A Show through Southern Africa,’ ii, 4.

† The Boers refused to allow him either horse or weapon.

Fort Royal at Prætoria. These colours I afterwards learned were handed to Lieut.-Colonel Gildea for safe keeping, and he, with a touch of chivalry in his action, had them carried inside those of his own regiment—the Royal Scots Fusiliers—as a guarantee that the safety of the colours his comrades-in-arms had placed within his care should be that of his own.

A few days after the disaster at Bronkhorst Spruit, a more deplorable incident occurred—the murder of one of the prisoners in the hands of the Boers, Captain Elliott, as he was crossing from the Transvaal into the Orange Free State. Captain Elliott and Captain Lambert, of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers, who had been captured two days before, had been liberated on condition that they left the Transvaal at once, and did not bear arms against the Dutch during the war. They were conducted to the Orange river; but while they were trying to cross it at night, their escort treacherously fired upon them. Elliott was killed by the first shot; Lambert swam for his life amidst a shower of bullets, climbed the opposite bank and escaped uninjured. The Government of the Transvaal hastened to disclaim all knowledge of this cruel and cowardly action, and promised to do their utmost to bring the offenders to justice; but we are not aware that the promise was ever fulfilled.

The English forces in the Transvaal were under the command of Sir George Colley, who in vain attempted to guide the rebellion. At Lang's Nek and Ingogo he suffered a defeat—partly from that fatal error of generalship to which we have already adverted, and partly from the inferiority of his troops in musketry. Most of them were young soldiers, who had had little or no training in the use of Martini-Henrys; they fired rapidly, irregularly, and without aim; while every Boer was a marksman, whose bullets always hit their mark. The Boers, moreover, understood the value of cover; and posted themselves so as to take advantage of every tree or bush or inequality of ground,

avoiding with much skill and care an engagement at close quarters in which the British soldier's favourite weapon, the bayonet, would have turned the tide of battle against them. They specially directed their fatal fire at the British officers, who were shot down, one after the other, with unerring precision, while leading or endeavouring to rally their men. We may here observe that the lessons of the Transvaal campaign were not neglected by the military authorities at home; and that greater attention is now paid to the instruction of our rank and file in musketry, though in this direction a good deal is still left to be desired.

Sir Evelyn Wood, an officer who in a very few years has acquired a reputation for 'all-round' efficiency, had arrived at the Cape with reinforcements, had discussed 'the situation' with Sir George Colley, and then proceeded to Pietermaritzburg to make preparations for a vigorous prosecution of the campaign. But on Saturday night, February 26, Sir George Colley, who was encamped at Mount Prospect, conceived it desirable to occupy Majuba Hill, an eminence, which commanded the Boer position on the low flat ground beyond Lang's Nek. Untaught by previous disasters, he seems to have taken no precautions to guard against surprise, and at early dawn the Boers crept up the hill on three sides, almost unseen, and poured a deadly fire into the small British force, which suddenly found itself out-flanked and surrounded. His faults as a commander Sir George Colley almost redeemed by the cool calm courage with which he directed the movements of his men; but he was shot down just as he was giving orders to cease firing. As usual, the officers were the first to fall; and the men, surprised and confused, and harassed by a rain of bullets, broke and fled. Some escaped; many were killed; not a few were taken prisoners. The defeat was absolute, and the circumstances attending it were even more painful to a proud and high-spirited nation than those which lent such melancholy memories to the Battle of Maiwand.

Peace, however, was soon afterwards concluded. A large party in England protested with some reason that the slaughter at Lang's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba Hill should first have been avenged, and the honour of our arms asserted; but the Government, and probably the great majority of Britons, felt that the war was as unjust in its conception as it had been unfortunate in its conduct, and that England was strong enough to be generous. No sane man could doubt that England, if she put forth her power, could easily subjugate a score of Transvaals; and, indeed, a force of all arms had by this time been accumulated in South Africa against which the Boers would have had no hope of success. But for this very reason the Government considered it a duty to prevent further bloodshed, as they had determined to rescind the act of annexation; and accordingly they concluded a treaty with the Boers by which the Transvaal or South African Republic was re-established under British protection.

The sole satisfactory feature of the Transvaal war was the gallantry displayed by the small British garrisons which occupied its principal towns. Thus, Leydenburg was successfully defended by Lieutenant Long; Marabastadt, by Captain Brooke; Staudntore, by Major Montague. The defence of Prætoria by Colonel Bellairs was really a very admirable exploit; as was that of Potchefstrom by Colonel Winslow and Major Clarke. But, as a whole, the campaign in the country of the Boers contributed a chapter to our military history which no Englishman can read with satisfaction.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAMPAIGNS IN EGYPT AND THE SOUDAN

THE military revolution in Egypt of which Arabi Bey was the ostensible leader originated in 1881; but it did not assume formidable proportions until the following spring, when the Bey had been made a Pasha, and had coerced the Khedive into appointing him War Minister. By treaty the British Government was bound to support the throne of Tewfik the Khedive, nor could it regard with indifference a movement which threatened the safe navigation of the Suez Canal, and England's vast commercial interests in the East. Accordingly the Mediterranean fleet, under the command of Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour (now Lord Alcester), was ordered to Alexandria, where Arabi was exhibiting no ordinary energy in enlarging and strengthening the fortifications. On the 11th of June a riot broke out, in which many English and French subjects were killed, and it was with difficulty that the British consul escaped from the fanatical mob. As yet the British Ministry, embarrassed by the doubtful attitude of France, had refrained from military intervention; but circumstances now compelled it to declare that it would at all hazards fulfil its treaty

obligations to the Khedive. Arabi, probably encouraged by secret assurances from the Porte, continued to press forward the defences of Alexandria, until they became a danger and a menace to the British fleet, and the Admiral then received orders to prohibit their further extension. This prohibition being disregarded, he was instructed by telegram, on the 11th of July, to intimate that unless the forts surrounding the harbour were immediately abandoned with a view to their dismantling, the guns of the fleet would open upon them. Turkey endeavoured to obtain a delay of twenty-four hours; but this was refused. The European residents and visitors had meanwhile made haste to quit Alexandria; and at nightfall on the 10th of July, the British fleet took up a position suitable for the work it had to do. It consisted of eight great ironclads and five gunboats, with a total force of 3539 men and 102 guns. These guns were, of course, of a calibre previously unknown in naval warfare.

The action began at seven in the morning, and was prolonged until evening, when all the forts were silenced, though the Egyptians had handled their artillery with skill and resolution, many of the women and children taking their turn in serving the guns. As no overtures of capitulation were made, Admiral Seymour renewed the bombardment at daylight on the 12th; but after a few shots a flag of truce was hoisted in the town, and the Admiral then sent an envoy to require the immediate surrender of the forts. Toulbah Pasha, who was in command, replied that this could not be done without the Khedive's permission, and a truce until half-past three o'clock was conceded by the Admiral. No sign of submission being made, the firing was again resumed. Then a flag of truce was hoisted for the second time, and another envoy was despatched, who quickly brought back the unwelcome information that, taking advantage of the flags of truce, Arabi had withdrawn his battalions from the forts, and that Alexandria was

abandoned to the mercy of the mob. Unfortunately, the Admiral had no troops on board the fleet; and for two days the beautiful city of the Ptolemies was a scene of the wildest anarchy. It was set on fire in several places; its stately mansions were broken into and plundered; its bazaars were ruthlessly ravaged; upwards of two thousand Europeans were massacred. At length the Admiral landed a force of blue jackets and marines, who quickly put an end to the grim confusion that prevailed. The streets were patrolled, plunderers caught *flagrante delicto* were shot without benefit of clergy; the Khedive, who had retired to Ramleh during the bombardment, and been held in a kind of quasi-captivity, was brought back to Ras-el-Tin, and installed in his palace under a guard of 700 marines.

The British Government now acted with energy and decision. Reinforcements were hurried to Alexandria, and Sir Garnet (now Lord) Wolseley was appointed to the command. It was determined that Arabi and the rebels, as they were called, should be put down. Wolseley drew up a plan of campaign, which he carried out with admirable accuracy; deciding before hand all its leading details, and arranging where and when the final blow should be struck. He arrived at Alexandria, and it was universally supposed that from thence he would direct his operations. But having carefully concerted his measures he suddenly entered the Suez canal, and carried his transports to a convenient point of disembarkation, from which he led his troops in the silent night to attack Arabi and the Egyptian army, who lay entrenched at Tel-el-Kebir. His force consisted of about 11,000 infantry, and 2000 horse and sixty guns. The advance began at half-past one on the night of September the 12th-13th, and with a perfection of discipline which all military critics have acknowledged, the columns kept touch in the silence and the darkness, and at day-break, broke unexpectedly upon Arabi's entrenchments like a storm of fire. The surprise of the Egyptians was

complete. There was some confused firing, and here and there the resistance was desperate enough; but nothing could withstand the rush and onset of the British soldiery. With the bayonet they carried the first line of defences, and in half-an-hour had driven the Egyptian army from their position. Wolseley then pushed forward his cavalry and mounted infantry, under Sir Drury Lowe, and riding across desert, without drawing rein, this small body of battle-worn men, appeared before the gates of Cairo, and insisted upon its surrender. The annals of war—nay, the romances of chivalry—relate no more stirring exploit than this desert-ride under the hot Egyptian sun, and then the immediate capture of a great and populous city, which yielded with less ado than Jericho to the trumpets of Joshua! The British troopers entered Cairo in triumph, and received the sword of Arabi, who had so vainly measured his weakness against the strength of Britain. The next day Wolseley brought up the infantry. The war was at an end, and Britain at liberty to dispose of the destinies of Egypt.

The protectorate we undertook there—for such it was in reality, however anxiously we strove to disguise the fact from ourselves—speedily involved us in fresh troubles. For some sixty years Egypt had exercised an imperfect authority over the wide and partly barren region of the Soudan—the ‘happy land’ of the Turkish slave-hunters. Under the rule of the Egyptian Pashas it had sunk into a woeful condition of want and misery; and in 1881 its unhappy inhabitants were goaded by their sufferings to the brink of revolt. They halted there only because they had no leader; and without a leader men can move neither for good nor ill. But in the year we speak of a leader suddenly appeared in the person of the too-notorious Mahdi. Mohamed Achmet, the son of a Dongola carpenter, who gave himself out to be the prophet or Mahdi, foretold by Mohamed, who was to re-establish the authority of the religion of Islam. To this man, so mysteriously invested

with the atmosphere of sanctity, the Soudanese rallied in thousands, and though defeated in his earlier engagements with the Egyptian troops, he soon welded together his various bands into a compact army, with which he was able to cross the White Nile, and invade the province of the Bahr Gazelle. In January, 1883, he captured the town of El Obeid in Kordofan. Here the Egyptian Government might well have allowed him to remain; but it was eager to recover its grip of the Soudanese provinces, and, without the assent of the British Government, which declined all responsibility, it despatched a considerable force, under Hicks Pasha, an English officer, then in its service, to recover the Kordofan. Unfortunately, this force was made up of Egyptian troops of very inferior quality—men possessed with a superstitious dread of the Madhi, ill-fed, ill-trained, ill-armed. No wonder, therefore, that when it was decoyed into a defile, and attacked by an overwhelming mass of the Mahdi's forces, inspired with the enthusiasm of religious fanaticism, it was broken to pieces. The battle took place at Kashgal, and lasted from the 3rd to the 5th of November, 1883. The Egyptians were slain almost to a man.*

The Soudan was lost to Egypt, but it still held several Egyptian garrisons in its inhospitable embrace. At Sinkat, in the east, was Tewfik Pasha with a small force. At Khartoum, Colonel de Coetlogon, an English officer, was in command of some 4000 Egyptians. Berber and Dongola, Kassala and Sumaar, Fashoda and Amandel, all these were held by Egyptian troops; Suakim, on the Red Sea, owed its safety to the presence in its harbour of British gunboats. What was to be done with these unfortunate garrisons? The Egyptian Government could do nothing; and the British Government was reluctant to undertake the responsibility of an expedition into the Soudan. Indecisive

* Hicks Pasha was killed; as also Mr Edmund O'Donovan, the distinguished special correspondent of the 'Daily News.'

counsels are fruitful of delay and disappointment; and granting the difficulties and embarrassments that lay in the path of our ministers, whatever course they resolved upon adopting,—still it is devoutly to be wished that they had faced them with greater energy. Early in 1884, however, they made it clear to the Egyptian officials that the advice they gave it was their intention to see adopted and acted upon, and they insisted on the abandonment of the Soudan, promising at the same time to despatch a British officer of high authority to Khartoum, with full powers to settle the future government of the country, and to withdraw the Egyptian garrisons. Every reader knows that, in obedience to an enthusiastic expression of feeling on the part of the public, the officer chosen for this hazardous and delicate work was General Gordon—popularly known as ‘Chinese Gordon,’ in allusion to his remarkable exploits in the service of the Chinese Government. Accompanied by Colonel Stewart, a soldier of experience, with much knowledge of the Eastern people, he proceeded to Egypt, had an interview with the Khedive and his ministers at Cairo, and then plunged into the Desert, without guard or escort. In due time it was known that he had reached Khartoum in safety, and been received there with the welcome due to a deliverer. He acted with characteristic energy; sent away Colonel de Coetlogon and a portion of the garrison; established an autocratic paternal administration; and finding evacuation more difficult than he had expected, began to drill and arm a body of troops, and to strengthen and enlarge the fortifications of the city—round which, meanwhile, the hosts of the Mahdi gathered rapidly, until they cut off his communication with the outer world. For months, with the exception of two or three brief and not very intelligible messages, which his native agents succeeded in carrying through the rebel lines, England knew nothing of the position and perils of her

heroic son, beleagured in that remote corner of the unfriendly Soudan.

Meanwhile, there were other places in that ill-fated country to which a series of unhappy incidents compelled the attention of the public. Tokha was surrounded by the Mahdi's partisans, under a leader of fierce temper and great military capacity, Osman Digna. Its garrison was reduced by want of supplies to such desperate straits that the Egyptian Government was moved to attempt its deliverance. An army—if such a term may correctly be applied to a few regiments of wretched fellaheen, raised by conscription, undisciplined, badly fed, badly armed—was placed under the command of Colonel Valentine Baker ('Baker Pasha'), and despatched on a mission of rescue. Accompanied by Colonel Burnaby (of Khiva celebrity) and a few other English officers, Baker, with some 3000 men, advanced from Trinkitat on the 4th of February, and almost immediately came into contact with Osman Digna's Arabs at a place called Teb. There was a furious charge—a timorous attempt at resistance—a wild panic-stricken flight—and all was over. The Arabs swept the field resistlessly—like a simoom. They speared and stabbed the wretched fugitives with remorseless hate. So cowed were the fellaheen, that when their pursuers overtook them, they made no effort in self-defence, but threw themselves on their knees, and submitted their necks to the fatal stroke. It was not a battle, but a slaughter. The English officers fought as English officers always fight; but their example failed to rally or encourage the miserable Egyptians, and at length when the day was hopelessly lost, they turned their horses' heads, rode straight through the swarm of furious fanatics, and effected their escape to Trinkitat. Fortunately the Arabs did not carry the pursuit so far, or we may well doubt whether any would have survived to tell the sad story of the day's disaster. Baker and his companions restored some semblance of order among the

survivors, embarked them on board their ships, and departed from the ill-omened port.

This unhappy event forced the hand of the British Government. Baker Pasha was not, it is true, an officer in its employment, but he was a British officer, and his defeat would be regarded, throughout the Mohammedan world, as a triumph of the green banner of Islam over the arms of England. It was an indispensable act of high policy that, in order to preserve her prestige in the East, and along with it the vast commercial interests which that prestige supported, she should overcome Osman Digna. No doubt it is one of the misfortunes of the world-wide extent of empire of which we Englishmen are not unreasonably proud, that it is vulnerable at so many points, and that hostile contact at one of these points sends a shiver, as it were, through its entire corporate structure. The disaster at Trinkitat, at the first glance, would seem to be of no importance to a great naval and military power like England, yet her statesmen knew that its effect would be felt at Delhi as at Cairo, at Candahar as at Assouan, in every Indian bazaar and among every Mohammedan community, as in all the exchanges of the European capitals. On the day after the news of the defeat of Teb became known in London, the electric wire flashed thither the intelligence of the massacre of the garrison of Sinkat. The Government hesitated no longer; its orders were despatched to Cairo and Alexandria; and on Tuesday, the 10th of February, Admiral Hewett, our naval commander-in-chief in the Red Sea, announced that England had undertaken the defence, and would be responsible for the safety, of Suakim, the principal harbour on the Red Sea coast.

Troops were landed there without delay; and on Friday, the 24th, General Graham arrived to take the command. On that very day it became known that the garrison at Tokha had surrendered to Osman Digna. It was too late to relieve the garrison, but there was time to put down the

Mahdi's victorious lieutenant. With about 4000 men,—English and Indian regiments,—General Graham advanced from Trinkitat on Friday the 28th of February, and when within half-a-mile of the scene of Baker Pasha's defeat—the lost field was indicated by putrid heaps of the slaughtered Egyptians—was attacked by the Arabs, supposed to be about 12,000 strong, who opened fire with the Krupp guns they had captured at El Teb. They had thrown up a rude kind of earthwork, on which their cannon were mounted and their colours planted—strange barbaric banners, embroidered with quaint mystical devices. To the clang and shriek of their bagpipes the Gordon Highlanders advanced right steadily, supported by the rest of Graham's force, and covered by the fire of the artillery, until, having reached the Arab defences, they charged with their bayonets, and in spite of a desperate resistance—the Arabs facing rifle and bayonet with the wild courage of their race—carried them in one fierce rush. In this brave deed of arms Colonel Burnaby greatly distinguished himself: was one of the first to leap the parapet, receiving several wounds in the affray. The Arabs, though defeated, were not crushed, and they retired with a sullen reluctance which greatly impressed the victors. Their loss was not less than 2300 killed and wounded; the British only thirty-two killed and 142 wounded.

On the day following, General Graham entered Tokha, and having rested his men, issued a proclamation to the Arab tribe, in which he summoned them to abandon Osman Digna, and warned them against further resistance to the power of Great Britain. The Mahdi's lieutenant, however, continued to command the faithful adhesion of his followers; and as in his encampment at Tamanieb he still maintained a formidable attitude, Graham resolved to dislodge him. It was early in the morning of Thursday, the 13th of March, when, having marshalled his men into two oblong squares, arranged *en echelon*,—the formation best adapted, it was

thought, to baffle the impetuosity of the Arab onset, which only the coolest veterans can withstand in line when it is supported by a preponderance of numbers—he moved against Osman Digna's position. The ground was broken up by ridge and hollow, and thickly covered with bush, and the British advance being inadequately protected by skirmishing parties or bodies of cavalry, the Arabs succeeded in reaching the front square, and penetrating it with sword and spear. For a moment the 65th wavered, and the 42nd and the Marine Brigade were driven back. The issue of the battle seemed to hang upon a thread, when a dashing charge of cavalry checked the Arabs; the square re-formed; and the second square, under Redvers Buller coming up, the two poured in a tremendous fire, which drove the Arabs over the ridge, leaving 3000 dead upon the field, besides a multitude of wounded. The British troops then entered Osman Digna's valley, swept the opposite slope clear of the foe, and burnt the village of Tamanheb, from which the battle takes its name. The loss of the victors was seventy killed and 100 wounded.

As Osman Digna continued to threaten Suakim, and collected forces to attack it, Graham considered it necessary to inflict upon him further punishment. On Tuesday, the 25th, and two following days, he marched, therefore, to Tamanheb, and burnt Osman's camp. The enemy fired a few shots; but their spirit had been broken down by the crushing defeat of the 13th, and they ventured upon no formal resistance. They dispersed in all directions, and Osman, with a few followers, fled to the hills.

The Mahdi's influence in the Eastern Soudan was, to all appearance, greatly broken. The Home Government, therefore, ordered Graham to return to Egypt with his troops; and at the same time refused a request which General Gordon had made for the despatch of two squadrons of cavalry from Suakim to Berber, to receive and protect a convoy of 2000 women and children from Khartoum.

The feasibility of the project was more than doubtful, and the Government probably exercised a sound judgment in declining the responsibility which it unquestionably involved; but the hurried withdrawal of General Graham's victorious army was proved by after events to be a grave error. A recent writer remarks, with some stringency, that 'to the looker-on at the political game, the order appears an act of inexplicable folly.' 'Was it worth while,' he asks, 'to send out an army to the Red Sea littoral, merely to slaughter a few thousand Arabs and then come back again? Did the Government think that a couple of inevitable defeats of Osman Digna settled the Soudan difficulty? Not to have gone to the Soudan at all would have been intelligible enough; but to complicate the matter still further by going, by having a battue of Arabs, and then hurriedly coming away again, seemed a policy only worthy of the Duke of York in the nursery rhyme, and not of a serious and responsible Ministry.' The Ministry, however may have been influenced by considerations which outsiders can but dimly conjecture; and it is fair to admit that they defended their line of action with a good deal of vigour, and to the satisfaction of at least a large body of British opinion.

In the summer of 1884 the position of General Gordon at Khartoum ceaselessly occupied the attention of the public; and the Government began to make preparations for his rescue by a British expedition, as soon as the cool season in the Soudan would allow military operations to be carried on with safety. The problem was, how to reach Khartoum. On this point military authorities were greatly divided. There were some who advocated the Suakim-Berber route; there were others who regarded the Nile as the natural and obvious highway. When the supporters of the former enlarged upon the difficulties of the Nile navigation, with its rapids or cataracts: the supporters of the latter dwelt upon the dangers of the waterless desert

that lies between Berber and Khartoum. The Government finally adopted the Nile route, acting upon the recommendation of Lord Wolseley; and to that distinguished officer was entrusted the command of the new expedition. He started for Cairo in the first week of September; and with indefatigable energy hurried on the necessary work. The force to be employed numbered about 8000 picked British troops, who were to be conveyed to *Sarakhs*, 860 miles from Alexandria, by rail and steamers. Thence they were to cover the 844 miles by water to *Khartoum* in long shallow boats, specially constructed, so as to combine the maximum of accommodation with the minimum of draught. Each carried ten soldiers with stores for ninety days, and could sail well in fifteen inches of water; and Lord Wolseley calculated that the expedition would reach *Khartoum* by the New Year. In order to traverse the desert rapidly he called for volunteers from the British regiments, and formed them into three camel corps, 1100 strong in all. His plans were laid down with the utmost precision of detail, and were executed, all things considered, with a remarkable exactness. Every link in the chain was carefully wrought; and the chain was everywhere equal to the pressure put upon it. With immense labour the boats ascended the river, being well handled by a force of blue-jackets, with 500 Canadian boatmen and a large number of *Kroomen*,—the soldiers heartily assisting to tow them through the whirling current of the Cataracts; and on the 16th of December Lord Wolseley, with his advanced guard, arrived at *Korti*, where he established his headquarters, and awaited the arrival of the main portion of his force.

Ill news from *Khartoum*, however, determined him to undertake a daring movement. He would strike across the Desert to *Shendy*, and thus save the time and labour which the sinuous course of the Nile necessarily imposed upon his troops. The distance was one hundred and eighty miles;

but half way across, at Gakdul, were some copious wells, and on the 30th of December, General Sir Herbert Stewart, with 1500 men, was pushed forward to seize them. Meanwhile, General Earle, with a small body of infantry, was ordered to proceed in boats to Abu Hamad, and thence to Berber, which had been re-captured by the rebels. Having seized the Gakdul wells, and placed a garrison to hold them, Stewart returned to Korti; but on the 8th of January, 1885, with all the mounted men and 400 of the Sussex regiment, again set out for Gakdul, whence he was to advance as rapidly as possible to Metammeh on the Nile. It was known that at Metammeh the Mahdi had an army of 5000 or 6000 men. These once disposed of, the road would be open to Shendy, where General Gordon had four steamers waiting for the arrival of the deliverers.

The Mahdi, kept well informed of the movements of the British, rapidly collected from his camp before Khartoum, from Berber, and from Metammeh, some 10,000 of his bravest warriors, whom he posted at Abu Klea, a valley with wells in it, twenty-three miles on the Korti side of Metammeh. Sir Herbert Stewart, with 1500 men, reached the head of the valley on the 16th of January; and finding his advance blocked by the rebels, halted for the night to rest and refresh his men. Thrice were they called to arms in the bewildering darkness. At dawn, having placed his long train of camels under guard, Sir Herbert led his men, arranged in square, to the attack. The enemy came on in two heavy masses, one of which charged furiously down the slope, fell upon the square, and by sheer impetus drove in the Dragoons, who were in somewhat loose order. For some minutes the Arabs were actually within the square, using their spears with fatal effect; but the British soldiers and seamen fought on with unequalled desperation, were brilliantly led by their officers, and, after a life-and-death struggle, drove out the enemy with terrible slaughter. The vehement character of the fight may be

measured from the heavy losses sustained on both sides. The British lost nine officers killed, including the Khivan hero, Colonel Fred Burnaby, and nine officers wounded; also sixty-six non-commissioned officers and men killed, and eight wounded. That is, twelve per cent. of all engaged were killed or placed *hors de combat*; most of them in the rush into the square, which did not exceed ten minutes. For when once the British square was re-formed, the superior discipline and weapons of our men rendered success on the part of the Arabs impossible. It was death to enter the 'fire-zone' which the Martini-Henrys maintained on each side of the square for some hundreds of yards; and even the fanatical courage of the Arabs was at last subdued. They retired to the hills, leaving 800 dead upon the field, and 1500 wounded.

Some military—and non-military—critics did not fail to censure Lord Wolseley for his rashness in throwing forward into the desert so small a force. But he could not have greatly increased the strength of Sir Herbert Stewart's command without endangering the water supply, which, as it was, gave out on one occasion, or without losing precious time, and he knew he had no time to lose, in waiting for more camels. 'He had no means of knowing the precise force by which his lieutenant's march would be opposed; while he had the means, as the event proved, of deciding that 1500 men would repel and defeat any force in the least likely to oppose them. Expeditions are not to be carried out without risk; and it is madness for Englishmen to insist, as they perpetually do, on great efforts, to insist that generals shall not be audacious. If they want to make sure of victory before every battle, they must bring their army and the expenditure up to the necessary level, and then confine themselves to certain great objects.'

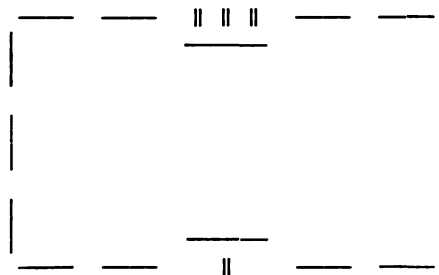
We subjoin Sir Herbert Stewart's dispatch respecting the events at Abu Klea.

'On the 16th of January,' he says, 'the force left camp

at 5 A.M., and halted at 11.30 A.M. Whilst halted, a report was received from Lieut.-Col. Burrow, 19th Hussars, who had been sent forward with his squadron to reconnoitre the neighbourhood of the Abu Klea Wells, informing me that he seen about fifty of the enemy standing in groups on the hills about four miles to the north-east. . . . Shortly afterwards the whole force was advanced—the Guards' Camel Regiment, Heavy Camel Regiment, and Mounted Infantry Camel Regiment, moving on a broad front in line of columns at half-distance, the ground being favourable. It soon became manifest that the enemy was in force, and looking to the hour—2 P.M., it did not seem desirable to attempt to attack until the following morning. Another bivouac was therefore selected, protected from the enemy's fire as far as the ground would permit, and various small works were constructed.

'During the night a light fire at long ranges was kept up by the enemy, doing little damage. Upon the 17th inst. it was plain that the enemy was in force. During the night they had constructed works on our right flank, from which a distant but well-aimed fire was maintained. In our front the manœuvring of their troops in line and in column was apparent, and everything pointed to the probability of an attack upon our position being made. Under these circumstances no particular hurry to advance was made, in the hope that our apparent dilatoriness might induce the enemy to push home. The camp having been suitably strengthened to admit of its being held by a comparatively small garrison—viz., forty mounted infantry, 125 Sussex and details; and the enemy, still hesitating to attack, an advance was made to seize the Abu Klea Wells. The force moved on foot in a square, which was formed as follows:—Left front face, two companies Mounted Infantry; right front face, two companies Guards, with the three guns Royal Artillery in the centre. Left face, two companies Mounted Infantry, one

company Heavy Camel Regiment. Right face, two companies Guards, detachment Royal Sussex. Rear face, four companies Heavy Camel regiment, with Naval Brigade and one Gardner gun in the centre.



The advance at once attracted a fairly aimed fire from the enemy in front and on both flanks, which, in order to enable the square to continue moving, it was absolutely necessary to hold in check by the fire of skirmishers. The enemy's main position was soon apparent, and by passing that position well clear of its left flank, it was manifest that he must attack or be enfiladed. As the square was nearly abreast of the position the enemy delivered his attack in the shape of a singularly well organised charge commencing with a wheel to the left. A withering fire was at once brought to bear upon the enemy, especially from the more advanced portion of the left front face of the square. The rear portion of this face, taking a moment or two to close up, was not in such a favourable position to receive the enemy's attack, and I regret to say that the square was penetrated at this point by the sheer weight of the enemy's numbers. The steadiness of the troops enabled the hand-to-hand conflict to be maintained, whilst severe punishment was still meted out to those of the enemy continuing to advance, with the result that a general retreat of the enemy under a heavy artillery and rifle fire soon took place.

After re-forming the square, the 19th Hussars, who had been acting in difficult ground, supporting our left flank, were pushed on to seize the Abu Klea Wells, and at 5 P.M. those wells were completely in our possession. Detachments of the corps then returned to the bivouac of the 16th, to bring up the camels and impedimenta left there, thus completing the force here this morning at 8 A.M. The strength of the enemy is variously estimated from 8000 to 14,000 men. My opinion is that not less than 2000 of the enemy operated on our right flank, 3000 in the main attack, and 5000 in various other positions; but it is difficult to estimate their numbers with any exactness. Their losses have been very heavy, not less than 800 lay dead on the open ground flanking our square, and their wounded during the entire day's fighting are reported by themselves as quite exceptional. Many are submitting.

'I deeply regret that the necessity of obtaining water delays my immediate advance on Metammeh, but I trust this may be overcome in a few hours. I cannot too deeply lament the loss of the many gallant officers and men that the force has suffered; but looking to the numbers of the enemy, their bravery, their discipline, and the accuracy of fire of those possessing rifles, I trust that this loss, sad as it is, may be considered as in some measure inevitable. In conclusion I would add that it has been my duty to command a force from which exceptional work, exceptional hardships, and, it may be added, exceptional fighting has been asked. It would be impossible for me adequately to describe the admirable support that has been given to me by every officer and man of the force.'

The victorious little army, weary with want of repose and with the long day's arduous struggle, slept well that night; and on Sunday morning was able and willing to continue the advance to the Nile. The general, however, deemed a longer rest advisable; and it was not until three in the afternoon that he gave marching orders. It had been

ascertained that the enemy, not wholly discouraged by their severe defeat, had strongly entrenched themselves at Metammeh, on the bank of the great river. With admirable military skill, Stewart resolved to strike the river at a point somewhat nearer Khartoum, where the enemy's position would be less formidable. Leaving a small detachment in charge of the Wells, he pushed forward promptly, occasionally halting his men for a brief rest, and at day-break came within touch of the Mahdi's troops. Picked men were they, and inspired with all the courage of their race and all the fanaticism of their creed. It was soon apparent that they were in great force and that they meant fighting. Stewart, however, was determined that his soldiers should not fight on empty stomachs, and shortly before six o'clock the bugles rang out a halt, when within about five miles of Metammeh. Our men, with almost incredible energy, constructed one of those enclosures of thorn-bushes and the like which, in the Soudan, are called a *zereba*—frail and flimsy-looking to the eye, but in the open plain forming a by no means insignificant defence. Before seven o'clock it was completed; and the men sat down to breakfast. Meantime, the desultory fire of the Arabs increased in volume, and they began to form in military array—evidently untaught by the sharp lesson they had received at Abu Klea—and bent upon storming the British position. The firing became fierce and general, as our troops, having breakfasted, fell into line; and over the wild and lurid scene soon hung a dense cloud of smoke and fine sand dust.

Suddenly a startling cry was raised—'The General is shot!' It was too true; he had received a bullet in the groin, and the wound afterwards proved mortal. Mr Cameron, the war-correspondent of the *Standard*, and Mr Herbert of the *Morning Post*, were both killed. The command of the force devolved upon Lord Charles Beresford by right of seniority, but as he was a naval officer, it was

assumed by Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, who, cool and collected, showed himself equal to the responsibility.

Says an eye witness:—‘The afternoon sun beat down upon us, but the battle still raged. Bravely, recklessly, the enemy faced our fire, striving madly to reach us, prepared to brave everything to keep our devoted little force from reaching the coveted river, whose cool waters we knew were flowing within three miles of our position. Two o’clock, and it became evident that this sort of thing could not go on all day, as I heard a grimy officer near me remark. Colonel Wilson evidently thought so too. Orders were given to construct strong works in which to place our heavy baggage and our wounded, who were to be perforce exposed to the heavy ordeal of being left in the desert fort, under the protection of such infantry force as alone could be spared for the dangerous duty. Under a heavy fire, and despite the frantic assaults of the enemy, the work was completed. Colonel Wilson had determined to send a column composed of the Guards, the Heavy Cavalry, and the Mounted Infantry, straight to the river for water. The movement was strikingly bold, as the little force would be exposed to terrible risks, and the main body would be weakened to division. Right in the path stood the enemy, unbeaten, thirsting for battle, reckless with the mad courage begotten of fanaticism. A commander made of weaker fibre might well have hesitated; but not so Colonel Wilson, who did not fear to realise that the risk must be taken. The troopers seemed yearning to come to close quarters with those who had been worrying them so long.’

The flying column started shortly after three o’clock on the afternoon of the 19th. They soon perceived the nature of the work that was before them. The enemy’s Remingtons maintained a running fusilade, and many a soldier bit the

* Mr Charles Williams, of *The Daily Chronicle*.

dust before the square reached the rising ground that lay between them and the Nile. Steadily firing, our men ascended the slope, to be met by a supreme effort on the part of the Arabs, but to yield not a step—offering not the slightest advantage to the fierce spearmen. The British musketry rang out sharp and true; a continuous rain of bullets pouring into the enemy's ranks, and checking their advance in spite of all their desperations. At a hundred yards, at fifty, they hesitated more and more perceptibly; at thirty yards, they turned and fled. Not a single Arab had reached 'the thin red line,' and the plain all around was strewn thickly with dead and dying.* After two hours' fighting, the way to the river was open.

A very graphic account of the fight for the Nile occurs in the narrative of the *Daily News* correspondent (March 11th, 1885). He says;—'A night march was resolved upon by Sir Herbert Stewart. Our route lay for some time by a belt of low hills that hemmed in the Wells. At sunset, we found ourselves traversing a plain that showed signs of having been recently covered with dhura. A very slight moon now lit up in ghastly tone our column gliding over the desert, but not sufficient to discover us to the enemy. We kept pipes out and remained perfectly quiet—the word of command passed down the ranks by mouth, took the place of the noisy bugle. . . .

'Towards the morning our ground became very broken and covered with considerable bush. Our column straggled terribly, and the Aden boys leading the camels became very noisy in trying to collect their straying animals. Here was a chance for a vigilant enemy, but nothing came of it. We struggled on. As morning broke the ground became clearer of bush, and as the sun rose, some of the 19th, who had started at early dawn, returned with the news that the Nile was in sight. That was glorious news to every one; our

* The loss of the enemy is estimated at 300 dead, and 1500 wounded.

water bottles had been empty for many hours after rationing ourselves with sips throughout the night. Though tired and weary, the news that the Nile was within reach of breakfast gave us fresh energy. A halt was sounded to close up the column. We were just below a ridge that shut out the Valley of the Nile. Presently scouts brought in news that necessitated the column immediately advancing as we arrived on the high ground. The Valley of the Nile presented itself. Miles of green mimosa bush stretched down to the silvery streak that winded its way through refreshingly green dhura. Two miles to our left was the town of Metammeh, with its mud-banked wall glistening in the early dawn. Some distance below the town, down by the water, a column of smoke lazily rose up. Could this be one of Gordon's steamers waiting for us? . . .

'The low sound of tom-toms came from the direction of the torero. All attention was then turned to the left. Across the clearings, and down into the mimosa bush streamed thousands and thousands of spearmen and riflemen, the tom-toms now getting louder, and hastening their measure as if to hurry the enemy upon us. This was more or less what we expected, but we hoped to gain the Nile and at least quench our thirst. It now seemed hopeless to force our column through the bush in front of us before the enemy under its excellent cover opened fire upon us. The general hastily glanced around, and decided to stand on a cleared eminence within a hundred yards of us. We had hardly time to cluster our camels and baggage together, and surround the whole with the infantry. Presently some shots on our left told us that the enemy's skirmishers had found out our range. Gradually closing round us under cover of the mimosa bush, they poured a most galling fire into our position. This was kept up till two in the afternoon, our counter skirmishers having but little effect, not being strong in numbers, and the volleys from our zereba doing but little execution. When any large body of the

enemy showed an inclination to rush us, Major Norton, with his guns, and Lord Charles Beresford played on them with considerable effect; but the situation was unchanged. Something must be done, and a square was resolved on to force its way to the river, and there build a fort and so hold the water. The square was formed up on the right of the little fort of commissariat boxes built round the guns and the Gardner [machine-gun]. . . .

‘The little square of 1200 men was at last formed up. I resolved to follow the fortunes of the brave little band on which the whole safety of the force depended. I took my little pony with me; he was very thirsty, not having been watered for an age. I thought there might be a chance for either one of us to have a drink that day. The square slowly moved off. The whole fire of the enemy now poured into us. Men fell thickly around, and were hastily taken out of the square to the zereba, which was still within easy reach. As we entered the mimosa valley the bushes seemed alive with musketry. The clear, steady voice of Colonel Boscawen was heard above the terrible din. ‘Halt! fire a volley at five hundred yards! ready;’ and then from the four faces of the square belched fourth flame and smoke. After firing one volley, we moved forward again with the same forward pace; the bearers picking up our wounded and placing them in the cacolets or camel-chairs. Thus, continually halting and firing volleys, we advance towards some sandy undulations with less scrub around. After our volleys the enemy’s fire seemed to slacken for a minute or two, and then it would break out with redoubled fury.

‘Our fire, if doing but little damage to the hidden enemy, helped to stimulate our men, for nothing is more galling to Tommy Atkins than to be fired at without returning the compliment; and if we did but little execution, we at least felt a little avenged by scaring them a good deal. After about a mile through the veritable valley of the Shadow of Death—for we were already carrying thirty

of our wounded, some of them having been wounded over and over again while perched in the camel chairs—a clearing was reached, and we found ourselves in the hollow of some sand-hills. Presently from our zereba, now far in our rear, Norton's guns opened fire, and Lord Charles Beresford's Gardner warned us to look out; and almost immediately the sky line around us became black with the enemy. The square was at once halted. Our soldiers gave a grunt of satisfaction, and there was a twitch of the shoulders in each man as he settled his heels firmly in the sand, and stood ready for the enemy, who had at last taken some tangible form. The skulking skirmishers of the bush now ceased fire. For a moment there was a dead silence. Then, with tom-toms beating, and loud shouts and yells, the Mahdi's spearmen bounded on—not running, but leaping forward—brandishing their weapons, forming shifting lines of light as the sun glistened on the balanced spear-heads.

'The Emirs leading the van on their chargers, followed by their standard-bearers, hurried on. The masses closed round. Then from the square steady volley after volley poured their deadly hail into the foe. When the smoke cleared away, there was nothing of the bold charge but its dead and dying, a few of the slightly wounded still staggering on to meet their death. For a moment there was hardly a word uttered in our little square. The sudden collapse of the attack was almost beyond realisation. Then burst forth a cheer that went up from that little valley from parched and thirsty throats; though weak and feeble as it was, every man's heart was in it. It might have answered for a prayer, for there was an unmistakable tone of thankfulness in it for our safe delivery from those merciless fanatical hordes that day. We now marched on for the waters. Only a few shots worried us from the bushes, and then gradually died out as we neared the Nile. The sun had now disappeared, and the faint glow of the

young moon showed us in the distant gloaming a silvery mass. It was the glorious water. "The river!" "The river," burst from every one.* The square was halted for a few minutes to rest. The wounded were lifted from their litters to see the river they were so dearly suffering for; the precious liquid that was to soften their galling wounds and quench their feverish thirst. With greedy look and thirsty throats we longed to dip into that liquid silvery mass; but we must await the return of the scouts to report all well in front, for they had been sent down to the shore to see if the enemy intended to try and snatch the precious water from us at the last moment. I could not help admiring the discipline of the British soldier, within the very grasp of what he had been marching and fighting for, for the last few days. There he stood patiently waiting till he was ordered to be watered in companies, and instead of a thirsty rabble tearing down to the river, he quietly went down to the water in this way. We at last got our wounded down to the banks, and built a zereba round them, Drs Ferguson and Turner dressing their wounds by the glimmer of two candles, for no camp fires were allowed. All night long the enemy showed their presence by beating their tom-toms. Very few of us heard this warlike ovation, for with the fatigue of our march and excitement of our fight we were pretty well exhausted, and most of us slumbered, though the chill of the river was intense, and the suppressed cries of the wounded and the incessant tom-toms of the enemy did not induce sleep.

The column returned to the zereba; and towards evening the whole force, with the wounded, camels, and baggage, marched to the banks of the Nile, which, before nightfall, they struck at Gubat, a village to the south of Metammeh, and somewhat nearer Khartoum. Here they entrenched them-

* We are reminded of the cry of *Thalatta! Thalatta!* when Xenophon and his Greeks reached the sea.

selves strongly. Next morning a reconnaissance in force was made towards Metammeh ; but it was soon discovered that it was held by too large a garrison and was too well fortified to be carried without a heavier loss than Wilson's little column could afford. There was a good deal of firing on both sides for about five hours, and Sir Charles then withdrew his men to Gubat.

In the midst of the ineffectual action, three of General Gordon's steamers came down from Khartoum, and were received with such cheers as only Britons can give. They landed half a battalion of the general's garrison, and a couple of brass guns. 'The touch between the advancing British force and General Gordon had thus taken place precisely as was expected, the gallant Gordon sending down his steamers and lending a helping hand at the very point when most needed. Nothing could have been better timed, and the greatest credit is due to the complete organisation by which this junction of the forces has been effected.'

Mr Williams, the war correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, continuing his graphic narrative says:—'The Khartoum contingent, it must be confessed, seemed a ragged lot, but they were hearty and jovial, in the best of spirits, and apparently fit for any amount of hard work. Some little time after the arrival of the three steamers, with the half-battalion, another steamer came down the stream towing a barge laden with provisions. Thereat our men gave another round of cheers, and all appeared to regard their troubles as now at an end. It was to the first degree reassuring to all of us to find Gordon not only in a position to send his steamers and men thus far, "but also to be able to spare provisions for our use and comfort." After the arrival of the Egyptians and our reconnaissance of Metammeh, it was deemed advisable to shift the camp selected on the banks of the river, to one in a more secure and advantageous position. Accordingly a site was selected on the river's bank, on flat ground it is true, but neverthe-

less it was safe. The position was speedily fortified, and everything made secure against attack for the night.'

On the 22nd, Colonel Wilson embarked a small force of infantry on board General Gordon's steamers, and made a reconnaissance down the river towards Shendy, which was found to be in possession of the enemy. They threw a few shells into the place, and then returned. In the meantime the rebels had occupied a small island in the Nile just opposite the British camp, with the evident intention of annoying them during the night by a continuous rifle-fire. The small guns on the steamers were speedily brought into play, the infantry sharpshooters kept up a rain of bullets, and the rebels speedily abandoned the island, and re-crossed the river.

There is a pathetic interest in the way in which a military critic in *The Times* summed up 'the situation' at this epoch of the campaign. How soon and how lamentably his anticipations were falsified!

'The position at Gubat, close to the Nile,' he writes, 'is held by a force about 900 strong, and Metammeh, two miles to the north, is still occupied by the enemy, estimated at 2000 strong, with three guns, but evidently discouraged by two successive defeats. Two of General Gordon's steamers are probably lying off Metammeh, and the two others may be expected to return from Khartoum to-day or to-morrow. The force at Abu Klea is safe, and has apparently not been attacked. The desert between Abu Klea and Gakdul does not seem to be unsafe. The Royal Irish Regiment will leave Korti to-day for the front, and will be followed shortly by the West Kent. These two regiments would add about 1000 men to the force at Gubat; and Metammeh, if previously abandoned, could be taken without difficulty. More than 3000 camels were probably sent with General Stewart's force; and Lord Wolseley has not, perhaps, as many as 1000 available at Korti and Gakdul. It may, therefore, be necessary to march the men across the desert, using the

camels only to carry water and provisions. Such a march would probably require a fortnight; but, on the other hand, as soon as the position at the front clears a little, an effort will at once be made to send back a large body of camels to Gakdul. It may now be taken as certain that Lord Wolseley has obtained a complete military hold over the Korti-Gubat line, and that the difficulty of communications along it will be due to want of transport. Almost more important, however, is the presence of the steamers on the Nile, which Lord Wolseley owes to General Gordon's unrivalled achievement. These steamers are probably capable of conveying about 200 men each, and from Metammeh Lord Wolseley will be able to reach Berber in two days, to clear the river banks of the enemy, to meet General Earle's boats when they surmount the fifth cataract, and, if necessary, to tow them up to Khartoum. Thus the power which these steamers confer will modify all the future operations of the campaign. Hard work, and perhaps hard fighting, still lies before the relief expedition. But the crisis of the campaign has passed, and with the establishment of the British force at Gubat and the opening of communication with Khartoum, the operations enter on a new phase. The crisis has been sharp, and it has cost the country many valuable and valued lives; but the brave men who have met a fate few English dread and some covet have not died in vain, since they have won for their comrades a position which admits of no doubt, and they have definitely lessened the difficulties which bar the way to the relief of Khartoum.'

It may be said without exaggeration that the British public have never followed any expedition with deeper interest than that which laboriously made its way up the Nile to the rescue of Gordon. There was a strange romance about it which appealed to the popular imagination—Egypt is a land of so many mysteries, and of such associations with the Past; to the Nile itself attaches a

charm of which no one can be unconscious. An expedition up the great river of Egypt must always have appealed to the sensibilities of the people ; but with what special force when its object was the release of one of the noblest Englishmen of his age—a hero without guile—a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*—who had obtained an enduring place in the national affections. Week after week had England watched with anxious eyes the slow progress of her army, fearful lest by some sad mischance it might so be delayed as to fail in the accomplishment of its object. Intense, therefore, was the feeling of rejoicing with which she received the intelligence of Stewart's victories, and his brilliant march upon Metammeh,* absolute was the confidence with which she then looked forward to the speedy defeat of the Mahdi, and the happy deliverance of Gordon from the peril and privation which he had endured for so many months, and with such chivalrous fortitude. Alas, at the very moment when the long cherished hope seemed to be on the point of fruition, the destiny which governs human affairs, and delights apparently in a cold and cruel irony, dashed it to the ground, for ever spent and broken.

It was on the 19th of January that Sir Charles Wilson and his force reached Gubat. It was not until the 24th, that, with a couple of Gordon's steamers,† having on board some companies of infantry, he started for Khartoum.

* It is impossible to make too much of this achievement, or of the men to whom we owe it. 'Wellington's men in the Peninsula,' says *The Spectator*, 'were disorderly roughs, compared with the lads who, under General Stewart, marched across 200 miles of desert, bore a distressing lack of water without flinching, fought and won two battles against enemies eight times their own number, and as brave as themselves, and killed as many as themselves, and wounded twice as many more, lost one-fifth of their own total by death or wounds, broke into ringing cheers at the sight of the Nile, and though almost sleepless for four days, begged on the fifth to be allowed to storm Metammeh.'

† The 'Bordein,' with Sir Charles Wilson, Captain Gascoigne, Khasm-el-Mous Bey, sixteen non-commissioned officers and privates of the Royal Sussex and 110 Soudanese (Gordon's) troops ; and the 'Tall Howeiya,' with Captain Trafford and ten men of the Royal Sussex, fifty Soudanese troops, and Lieutenant Stuart Wortley. They left Metammeh at eight in the morning.

This delay has provoked severe animadversions from several critics. Sir Charles Wilson has replied to their strictures, and forcibly defended his conduct of affairs. To decide between the opposing parties is not within our province ; and we shall limit ourselves to saying that though the delay was unavoidable, it was not the less deplorable. But the question is one affecting so many interests, and involving so many delicate considerations, that no one will be anxious to answer it prematurely.

As he ascended the river, a desultory fire was kept up from both banks, showing that they were in the possession of the Mahdi's followers ; and an Arab who came on board reported that Khartoum had fallen and that General Gordon was dead. These unwelcome tidings were, at first, discredited by the rescue party, and the two steamers continued their voyage, until at noon on the 29th, they were near enough for Sir Charles Wilson to discover that no flag was flying from the Government House, and that the houses in the town appeared to be wrecked. Shortly afterwards some guns at Halfiyeh opened upon them, and from various points the musketry fire grew heavy ; with banners flying, the enemy showed in large numbers in the lost city. There was no longer any room for doubt, and with grief and disappointment at their hearts, Sir Charles Wilson and his companions prepared to return to Gubat. Messengers who had been sent ashore to collect information confirmed the sad news that, on the night of the 26th, Khartoum had been captured through the treachery of Farag Pasha, and Gordon killed. Had Sir Charles Wilson been able to start from Gubat on the 20th or 21st, it is probable that the catastrophe might have been averted. Evidence collected from more sources than one would seem to show that the arrival of even a dozen ' red coats ' might have assured the fidelity of the garrison and inhabitants of Khartoum.

The return voyage was not accomplished without misadventure. On the 29th, in passing the Shabluka cataract,

the 'Tall Howeiya' ran on a rock, making a large hole in her bottom, and sank rapidly. All on board were saved in a large nugger which the steamers had in tow; but a considerable quantity of ammunition was destroyed. On the 31st, when near the Island of Meruat, the 'Bordine' also struck a rock, and stove in her bow, the water rushing in very fast.* She was brought up alongside a small island, where she sank to the level of her deck. Sir Charles Wilson determined to bivouac on the island and remain there until relieved; and Lieut. Stuart Wortley was sent on to Gubat in a small rowing boat, with four English soldiers and eight natives, to report the position. Lord Charles Beresford immediately started to their rescue with the remaining steamer. As he approached, the enemy opened fire, and one round shot passed through the boiler, causing an explosion which Sir Charles Wilson regarded as fatal. He crossed his men, therefore, to the Gubat bank, and prepared to fight his way to the camp; but Lord Charles Beresford coolly waited for three hours while his engineers, under a tremendous fire, repaired the boiler; and then, once more getting up steam, rescued the party on the bank, and safely carried them down to Abu Klea—a 'plucky' feat, as Lord Wolseley justly called it.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the sensation produced in England when it was known that the expedition had failed in its object—that the heroic Gordon was dead—that the Mahdi reigned in Khartoum. So great a change in the situation demanded the immediate consideration of Government; and apprehensive that the Mahdi's success might encourage him to advance northward, and expose Upper Egypt to invasion, the British Ministry resolved to reinforce Lord Wolseley, in order that, when the hot season was over, he might prosecute the necessary measures for the recovery of Khartoum and the suppression of the rebellion. It was

* It was afterwards ascertained that the steamer was wrecked designedly.

further decided that an auxiliary force of 12,500 men, under General Graham, should be landed at Suakim to clear the road to Berber and crush Osman Digna; and that a railway should be constructed between Suakim and Berber, so that Wolseley, after the recapture of Khartoum, might evacuate the Soudan by that shorter and speedier route. These plans were eventually abandoned (1885), when it was discovered that the tide of Mahdiism had ceased to flow towards the Egyptian frontier; and, with the tacit consent and approval of apparently the great majority of the English people, the expedition against Khartoum was given up, and Lord Wolseley recalled.

But we are anticipating events. The reader's attention must now be directed to the column which, under General Earle, one of the ablest officers in the British army, continued its slow and toilsome ascent of the Nile. After passing Birti, on its way to Abu Hamad, it found its advance blocked at Kerbeka, near Dalka Island, by a strong body of the enemy. Earle's force consisted of the Black Watch, the South Staffordshire, a squadron of Hussars, two guns of the Egyptian Artillery, and the Egyptian Camel Corps; but with this handful of men he prepared to dislodge the Arabs from the ridge they occupied. Early in the morning of the 10th of February, he formed up his troops, and moved towards the enemy's position in two parallel columns, while in front of it he posted his two guns and two companies of the Staffordshire. The main body pushed steadily forward over nearly impossible ground, driving the enemy before them, and seizing each successive ridge by short determined rushes. The advanced troops, meanwhile, reached the right rear of the enemy, which rested on the river, and thus completed their environment.

The Arab position was very formidable, consisting of rocky and broken ground, strengthened by loopholed walls, from which they plied with admirable aim a well-directed fusillade. As our musketry fire was not of sufficient power

to dislodge the enemy, General Earle ordered the Black Watch to charge with the bayonet. Never was this famous regiment known to fall short of its duty ! Its pipers struck up a lively skirl ; and away it went, with a hearty cheer,—shoulder to shoulder,—with the plumed bonnets falling low over flashing eyes and lips firm set ! From the loopholed walls the white rifle puffs shot out continuously ; but with a steady valour that proved irresistible, the Highlanders pressed forward, and drove the enemy from their shelter. Unhappily, General Earle fell just as the victory was accomplished. The British cavalry, meanwhile, had ridden on, far beyond the scene of action ; capturing the enemy's camp, three miles in the rear, before the Black Watch had carried the main position.

While the main attack was in progress, two companies of the Staffordshire regiment were directed to occupy a high and rocky hill, which the Arab riflemen stoutly defended. After General Earle's fall, the command was assumed by Major-General Brackenbury, who, when the principal position had been captured, ordered the remainder of the Staffordshires to join the two companies already engaged, and storm the hill with levelled steel. Inch by inch the enemy disputed the ground ; but the staunch Staffordshire men were not to be denied, and expelled them from their position. Thus closed in victory the five hours' fighting at Kerbekan ; fighting so magnificent in strenuous and resolute bravery, that Count von Moltke said of the force engaged in it, that it was not an army of soldiers, but an army of heroes. The sterling qualities of the British fighting man—his dogged courage, his indomitable resolve, his contempt of death and danger, his tenacity, were never more conspicuously exhibited. It is impossible to exaggerate the merits of that handful of warriors, who, in the face of a desperate and determined enemy, forced their way up the rugged steep, from crag to crag, and ridge to ridge, as coolly as if they were parading in St James's Park.

The British loss included General Earle, Lieutenant-Colonel Coveney, Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre, and nine non-commissioned officers and men killed ; and four officers and forty-two men wounded. The enemy lost between 500 and 600 killed and wounded.

The fall of Khartoum having set free the hosts of the Mahdi to act with all their vast numerical preponderance against the British expedition, Lord Wolseley hastened to concentrate his advanced columns at Korti, and issued orders for the recall of the river column, the command of which, as we have said, had devolved upon Major-General Brackenbury. Its return was safely accomplished with very little molestation from the enemy, whom the great heroic battle at Kerbeka had profoundly discouraged. We regret that our limited space precludes us from dwelling upon the interesting incidents of the river voyage, in which the men were honourably distinguished by their good humour, their patience, and their capability for hard work. The passage of the rapids was frequently attended with considerable danger and always with difficulty ; and it was admirable with what coolness and readiness of resource our soldiers addressed themselves to an unaccustomed task.

When Sir Redvers Buller arrived at El Gubat, with the Royal Irish, to reinforce the advanced guard, and take the command, he decided that, in view of the mass of fanatics which the Mahdi was assembling at Metammeh, the position was untenable. He forwarded, therefore, all the wounded, including Sir Herbert Stewart, to Abu Klea ; ordered the two steamers on the Nile to be dismantled and rendered useless ; burned all superfluous stores ; and on the 14th of February, evacuated Gubat, and, unperceived by the enemy, retired upon Abu Klea—a movement executed with consummate skill. After resting his men, and filling up the Abu Klea Wells—so as to render pursuit by the Arabs impossible, he withdrew to Gakdul, where, on the 16th of February, that gallant soldier, Sir Herbert Stewart,

breathed his last. On the following day Sir Evelyn Wood arrived at Gakdul with reinforcements. The whole army was concentrated at Korti between the 1st and 16th of March. On the 23rd Lord Wolseley began to withdraw his troops to Upper Egypt, where they were distributed along the line from Assouan to Wady Halfa.

The *corps d'armée* intended to operate from Suakim towards Berber, consisting of 10,000 British troops and 2500 Sikhs and Sepoys,—to which was afterwards added a gallant contingent of Australian volunteers,—assembled at Suakim early in March. Some delay was occasioned by the indisposition of General Graham, whom an abscess in the foot detained at Cairo; but about the middle of the month he assumed the command, and made vigorous preparations for an immediate advance against the enemy, who, numbering about 15,000 men, were full of confidence, and harassed the British lines almost every night, frequently killing the sentinels. On Thursday, the 19th, a reconnaissance in the direction of Handub showed that Osman Digna had massed his troops in a valley at Hasheen, near his old position of Tamai, whence Sir Gerald Graham determined upon expelling him.

Next morning, at daybreak, the British advanced. The formation adopted was that of a square, or rather of three sides of a square; the Marines, the Berkshire and the Surrey regiments in the front, the Guards on the right flank, and the Indian troops on the left. Scouting ahead in open order galloped the Mounted Infantry, and after them the Cavalry—the whole forming one of those picturesque martial spectacles which fire the hearts of men. The march was over trying ground, pebbles, or rather miniature boulders, and thick mimosa bush, proving very fatiguing. On arriving at the site selected for a new camp—between two parallel hills, with another hill crossing them towards Hasheen—the men were halted, and began the construction

of a zereba. Redoubts were thrown up on the hill tops—four in number, and a Gardner gun was placed in each.

The British force then resumed its advance, and before long sighted the enemy on a hill right in the line of march. The Marines and Berkshire regiments were ordered to the attack; and away they went at the double in so gallant a style, that to the onlookers it seemed a race by athletes, for the hillocks on the right of the ridge where the rebels had stationed themselves. By seizing upon these hillocks our troops would, to a certain extent, turn the enemy's left. The Marines were the first to reach them, and opening a well-directed fire upon the enemy, covered the further advance of the Berkshire men, who, making direct for the Arab position, began to ascend the hill steadily, firing as they went, until, within a short distance of the summit, they raised a ringing cheer, bounded over the ridge, and with thrust and volley, cleared it of their dusky antagonists. From the time the order to advance was given, until the Berkshires laid hold on this crowning summit, not more than fifteen minutes had elapsed.

In describing these recent battles we are glad to avail ourselves of the graphic narratives of the 'Special Correspondents' of the London press, who record their incidents and phases with admirable accuracy, and place us in the position of independent eye-witnesses of the scene. This class of writers has introduced into military history not only an exactness, but a vigour and a vitality which before it had almost wholly lacked. For our knowledge of Waterloo and Talavera, Minden and Fontenoy, we are indebted in the main to the dispatches of the generals in command, or to the piece-meal records of officers engaged in the action; the historian has to gather as best he may their details from a variety of sources, and put them together so as to form a connected and interesting whole. But this is now done with extraordinary force by the Special Correspondent, who photographs, as it were, every changing aspect of the battle,

from the opening artillery duel to the last fierce charge, which crowns one side with the glory of success, and involves the other in present disaster and future shame. What would we not give for an account of the great victories of Wellington from the pen of a Russell, a Forbes, a Macgachan, or a Cameron ?

The Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* shall describe for us the remainder of the Battle of Hasheen :—

‘Half-a-moment’s breathing-time and the Berkshire men were on again, sending the rebels helter-skelter over the spur into the plain below. Here the Bengal Cavalry, acting on the left base, charged the retreating rebels; the Indians, with their conspicuous turbans, their flashing lances, and waving pennons, making a gallant show in the noonday sun. But the Bengalee was not to have it all his own way. A small body of the rebels, as nearly as I can judge about forty in number, turned upon their pursuers, and charged with the utmost bravery. An old sheikh, mounted on a camel, led the Arabs on, waving his spear frantically, and his followers, nothing loth, rushed around the Bengalese flank, getting to the rear. The Indians charged home, piercing many of the rebels, and driving the others round the back of the hill, before the Guards’ square, which was drawn up on the right base. But as the Bengalese went back, the rebels gathered again like a cloud behind them, and the Indians were fairly chased home.

‘For a moment it seemed as if a vast confusion must ensue, but matters were soon righted. The Guards poured a heavy fire into the Arabs, but the rebels, following close upon the Bengalese, prevented the shots from having due effect. To give the Bengalese an opportunity of re-forming, the Guards’ square slowly fell back, firing all the time upon the rebels.

‘Gradually the fire became more effective. The Marines, who still occupied their position on the hillocks, covered the retrograde movement of the Guards’ square, pouring a

steady fire upon the Arabs. In an instant, however, the natives regained the hill from which the Berkshire men had previously dislodged them, and at once opened fire upon our men. It was at this moment that Captain Dallinson, of the Guards, was killed, together with a private, while two others were wounded. The whole force then fell gradually back for some little distance, when the Surrey men, who were holding the entrenched camp, and who had guns to protect the position, opened fire from the hillock on which the general and his staff were stationed, and soon shelled the enemy from the hill which he had occupied.

‘The rebels had managed, however, to inflict severe loss upon the Indians, Major Robertson being killed, together with five of his men, while six privates were wounded. The Indians whose horses were disabled stood little chance, the rebels giving no quarter, and finishing them off instantly. Seeing the straits in which the Bengalese were placed, the Horse Artillery quickly unlimbered, and opened fire in their support, but too late to effect an immediate improvement.

‘The enemy scattered their forces directly the shell fell amongst them, and the artillery were drawn into the Guards’ square.

‘The rebels showed no disposition to come near the Guards, but quickly fell back, when the full force of their fire was experienced. . . The 5th Lancers, in the meantime, charged down the pass leading to the zereba, but did not operate against the enemy on the plains. They dispersed the rebels before them in gallant style, but here and there little groups of rebels scorned to fly, and met their fate, fighting to the last. . . The Lancers drove the enemy to the back of the mound, and from thence, those who were unwounded made their way to the hills beyond, and were quickly out of range. . . After the enemy was shelled from the hill, he disappeared into his fastnesses, and

fighting was over for the day. The whole force then returned to the zereba, bringing the wounded into the improvised hospital where the most serious hurts were attended to, and every comfort afforded them.'

Our casualties in this action were twenty-three killed and forty-one wounded. The rebels (who at one time numbered 7000) lost between 700 and 1000 men.

On Sunday, General Graham pushed forward his second Brigade (under Sir John M'Neill), consisting of the Shropshire and Berkshire Regiments, and the Marines, together with the Sikhs, the 17th Bengal Native Infantry, and a naval contingent of about forty men, with four Gardner guns, to form zerebas, one at a distance of five miles, and the other at a distance of eight miles, in the direction of Tamai. The first zereba was to be occupied by the Indian regiments, and the second by the 2nd Brigade. On leaving camp, and entering the scrub and mimosa bushes, the Indian contingent formed a hollow square, containing the camels. The European brigade followed in close column. They advanced unopposed as far as their first halting place, when they set to work to construct the zereba decided upon. After working hard for four hours they stopped to lunch for a few minutes. It was then two o'clock. Notwithstanding the proximity of a courageous and desperate enemy, none of the usual precautions were taken, or at least, though some cavalry pickets had been thrown out, no attempt was made to reconnoitre or clear the bush. Thus it happened that a force of 5000 Arabs was enabled to creep up unperceived, and charging furiously on the convoys which had just started, they killed or cleared off hundreds of beasts, drivers, and followers, while the remainder in wild confusion fell back upon the zereba where the Indian troops were posted, and threw them into scarcely inferior disorder. The Sikhs fought determinedly, but the Bengalees gave way, retreating 'headlong' upon the British square. Our warriors, however, stood to their arms with magnificent

steadiness. A company of the Berkshires in a single discharge, mowed down a hundred of their adversaries; while the infantry and marines poured death on the Arabs in such close contact that in scores of cases 'their faces were blown away.' The Gardner guns hurled a pitiless storm of shot; and in less than twenty minutes Osman Digna's force retreated,—leaving upon the ground fully fifteen hundred dead, among whom were many women, clad in uniform, who had fought with Amazonian vigour.

The victory was complete, but had been won at heavy cost. At least thirteen European officers and 150 men were killed or wounded, besides some eighty Indians, nearly 200 camp-followers, and 700 camels. The loss was absolutely needless. It was due to a surprise, and no surprise could have taken place if the bush had been vigilantly searched, and an open space cleared round the zerebas.

Soon afterwards, Sir Gerald Graham concentrated his European troops within striking distance of Tamai, but on advancing found the village deserted. The Arabs, cowed by the defeats inflicted upon them, had fled to the hills. Graham burnt Tamai on the 2nd of April, and then returned to Suakim. Meanwhile, the railway was slowly and laboriously carried forward under military protection, though not without being exposed to nocturnal forays. At midnight on the 5th of May, Takool was taken and burnt, and the remains of Osman Digna's army dispersed in all directions. The British Government then abandoned the project of a second Soudan Campaign. The threatening attitude of Russia on the Afghanistan frontier rendered it desirable to liberate, in case of more urgent service being required from them, the troops stationed in and about Suakim; and General Graham, with his European and part of his Indian regiments, and the New South Wales contingent, sailed from Suakim in the latter days of May.

THE END



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